



# TEENAGER USED CAR AS WEAPON

Report by John Scott

**A TEENAGER banned from driving deliberately crashed into a stationary car in Quinton, knocking over the motorist who had just got out.**

The road rage incident came just five days after Shakeel Janjua stole a car at gunpoint.

Janjua has been locked up for five years, following his appearance at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Janjua careered into the parked Vauxhall Insignia sending sales manager Ivan Trebinski, 61, flying. Mr Trebinski had tailed the 19-year-old from Halesowen High Street to Clydesdale Road in Quinton, after he had been cut up by an Astra driven by Janjua on July 2 last year.

Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting, told the court: "Mr Trebinski was about to walk over to remonstrate over the driving of the other motorist after both cars stopped when the Astra suddenly sped away."

The victim told police: "It was driven directly at me, hitting the front of my vehicle." He was standing alongside the Insignia and was knocked down as a result of the collision.

Janjua drove off leaving the dazed sales manager with an injured shoulder before causing £500 damage to a Renault Clio when he crashed into it at a nearby traffic island.

The defendant had stolen a £1,500 Seat Leon on June 27, which was being sold by Faizal Mahmood at Bordesley Green. He had threatened Mr Mahmood with a gun, later accepted as an imitation firearm, telling him he would be shot if he tried to stop the vehicle being taken during a viewing. The Seat Leon was dumped soon afterwards after an accident.

## Racing

Janjua was arrested on July 3 and bailed pending further inquiries but on May 29 this year was seen speeding in a stolen Vauxhall Meriva on false plates after it was stolen in a car key burglary five days earlier.

The defendant twice smashed into a pursuing police car in a bid to escape after racing along the Hagley Road in Quinton at almost three times the 30mph limit shortly before 2am. He also went through red lights and drove the wrong way round a traffic island before the front tyre came off and, going at 30mph, he hurtled into a second police car that was blocking the road. Janjua ran off but was caught while attempting to climb a fence. He had two bags of cannabis and a knife on his person.

Mr Gurdeep Garcha, defending, said: "He has foolishly made some very grave mistakes." Janjua from Knowle Hill Road, Netherton, pleaded guilty to robbery, possession of an imitation firearm, assault, dangerous driving and possession of both cannabis and a knife.

He was jailed by Judge Nicholas Webb who told him: "You used a vehicle as a weapon but fortunately no serious injury was caused."

## BOROUGH IS GETTING LIT UP FOR CHRISTMAS



Home town hero Paralympian Jordanne Wiley turns on the Christmas lights at the Cornbow Shopping Centre, Halesowen

CHRISTMAS is officially under way in the borough after Black Country Paralympic tennis ace Jordanne Wiley switched on the festive lights in Halesowen – with more festive spectacles planned for Stourbridge, Brierley Hill and Dudley.

The wheelchair tennis champ said she was thrilled to carry out the honour in her hometown for the first time. "This is special for me because I love Christmas and I love being home," she told the crowd, before flicking the switch to the sounds of Slade's Merry Christmas Everybody.

Fairground rides, a craft and food market, Santa and entertainment from Black Country Radio put families in a holiday mood. Milling with the crowd were circus performers and a nine foot Christmas Party Robot.

After her final tournament of 2016, Team GB's Jordanne, 24, is spending six weeks at home and plans to cook Christmas dinner.

Stourbridge and Brierley Hill get lit up next Saturday, December 3. There will be festive family fun in Stourbridge town centre from 10am until 5pm including funfair rides on Market Street and live entertainment in

Crown Square and Fountain Square. Father Christmas will be in his grotto in the Ryemarket from 11am to 4pm, and there will be stalls on High Street and Coventry Street. Coronation Street star Jack P Shepherd will switch on the lights at 5pm in Crown Square.

Brierley Hill is celebrating from 11am with a Teenage Market in the Moor Centre and the lights switched on at 6pm followed by carol singing. Singer Connie Talbot joins Father Christmas for Dudley's switch-on on Stone Street Square at 4.30pm on December 10.

● Jordanne back in action – page 40

## RETAIL

### Revamped store creating 80 jobs

A NEW-LOOK JD Sports store will be opening at Merry Hill shopping centre creating about 80 jobs.

The 17,000 square feet store will open on December 9 following a major expansion and refurbishment.

Councillor Rachel Harris, who represents the Brierley Hill ward, said: "Replacing jobs lost from BHS is clearly really good news for the area. We need jobs coming into the centre for people of all ages. It's great news."

DJs will also be present as the store gets an up-tempo opening.

## DEATH

### Cigarette to blame for causing fatal fire

A CIGARETTE started the fire in which an elderly woman died.

Edith Williams was pronounced dead at the scene after the fire in her living room on Catesby Drive, in Kingswinford, on November 14.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire Service said: "The cause of the fire was a cigarette. The circumstances surrounding her death are still being investigated."

Emergency services were called to the property just before 11.30pm.

## ROADWORKS

### Lane closure set to cause traffic delays

MOTORISTS have been warned to expect delays on a busy dual carriageway in Halesowen during resurfacing work.

A closure of a lane on Grange Road is scheduled to be put in place from today (Thursday), from Grange Island to Vine Lane. The closure is expected to last for two weeks but the work will take place outside of peak traffic times.

The roadworks are set to be carried out between 9.30am and 3.30pm, and due to finish by December 8.

Grange Road, from Manor Way to the town centre, is one of the busiest roads in Halesowen.

## INSIDE

### 'WE NEED OUR LOLLIPOPS'



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# Home working to improve after report

INSPECTORS walked into a Netherton residential care home without being asked who they were, a report has revealed.

A lack of such safety measures along with concerns over the storage of medicine and outdated criminal checks, saw the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rate Nethercrest Residential Home in Netherton as 'requiring improvement'.

The premises on Brewster Street, part of Astonbrook Care Homes, provides accommodation and personal care to up to 43 older people, specialising in those with dementia. The CQC report states: "When we arrived at the home, we were let into the building by a member of staff who did

not speak with us or check who we were. The staff member opened the door and allowed us to walk into the home freely.

"This meant that the appropriate action had not been taken to ensure that people were kept safe from the risk of unauthorised people having access to their home. As the staff member had not stayed with us upon entering the home, they had also not ensured that the door was secured."

**Fridge**

Although the inspectors were pleased to see that staff had been required to provide criminal record checks, there was no system in place to ensure

these were updated. It was also highlighted that at the time of the inspection, on September 28 and 29, it had been identified for three weeks that the fridge used to store medicines had been too warm. No action had been taken in that time.

While concluding that the home required improvements, in terms of safety, effectiveness, care and leadership, the report did note positive aspects, including the standard of food.

Nick Farmer, Nethercrest operations director, said: "Since the CQC inspection the staff, working with our new manager and me at Nethercrest, have worked hard to do more than just match the CQC requirements on improvements."

# Protest over cuts to lollipop crossing patrols

**CAMPAIGNERS** fighting cuts to the school crossing warden service to save £395,000 a year have been served up a 'mishmash' of figures, it has been claimed.

Placard-wielding lollipop wardens demonstrated their anger outside Dudley Council House last week.

This was ahead of a scrutiny committee meeting looking into the proposals to withdraw funding for the service.

During a heated debate it emerged that officers could not agree on the number of jobs and crossings affected.

After a warden told the meeting he earned just £10 a day, councillors complained that the sums did not add up.

Scrutiny chairman Councillor Alan Finch described officers' response to questions as 'poor' and requested a breakdown of the figures.

## Extension

A consultation was launched last month and an extension granted when opponents argued they had not been given long enough to put their case.

A petition containing almost 9,000 signatures to save the wardens was handed to the council.

Last Tuesday's meeting heard there were 81 school sites, 63 wardens and a further 14 standby wardens involved in the service but it was pointed out the figures differed to those given to the last meeting.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare claimed the risks to children's safety would not be so great if the 20mph speed limit around schools was implemented during arrival and home times only, instead of a blanket restriction that drivers ignored.

Strategic director Alan Lunt said that with equipment and training factored in, £395,000 costs could be accounted for. He agreed to bring a breakdown of the figures to the next



Lollipop crossing wardens and their supports protest about cuts to their service outside Dudley Council House

meeting in January. But Councillor Matt Rogers said afterwards: "We are not dealing with numbers here but people who, in all weathers, make sure children get to school safely. They are at risk of losing their jobs. The officers should have been better prepared."

The council is not obliged to pay for school crossing wardens but mother-of-two Emma Swain, whose children attend Thorns Primary School, said it had a moral duty. She added: "A child will be killed if this goes ahead and the council must take the responsibility for that."

As part of the consultation, schools were asked to rate options. These included ending the school crossing patrol completely, retaining a crossing patrol operated and man-

aged by the council at an estimated rechargeable cost of £6,500, and retaining a crossing patrol site with staff who are directly employed and funded by schools. The estimated fee for that latter proposal would be £1,500 payable to the council.

## Choice

Only 26 of the 123 schools invited to take part in the consultation responded. Of those that did, 76.9 per cent put ending the provision completely as their last choice, with 53.8 per cent putting retaining it with the charge to the council as their first.

The council has blamed budget cuts imposed upon them by a reduction in Government funding.

In a plea to councillors at the meeting, resident Geoff Collins said:

"It is an indication of the world we live in that we're looking at Dudley Council potentially saving money when they could be saving children."

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, last week defended the authority's move, insisting the decision to review the service had not been taken lightly. She said: "Ultimately I would remind people that it is a parent's or guardian's responsibility to ensure children arrive at school safely. The council does not have a statutory duty to provide the service. We will always take the safety of children very seriously."

Councillor Finch said the committee and public had been given a 'mishmash' of information.

A final decision is due on March 6.

# Banned fan was caught with smoke grenade

A BLACK Country football fan, who was banned from attending games for five years, has been caught in front of the courts again after he was caught trying to attend a game with a smoke grenade.

Wolves fan Benjamin Richardson, aged 28, of Pebble Close, Stourbridge, was caught trying to attend a game between Stourbridge and Shrewsbury in July despite having a football banning order (FBO) against him in March.

He was spotted by West Midlands Police football unit officers and was arrested at the turnstiles for trying to breach his banning order.

A subsequent search found he had a smoke grenade with him.

Richardson denied the offences but was convicted after a trial at Dudley Magistrates Court. He was ordered to carry out 200 hours of community work and handed a court bill for £640.

PC Martin Portman, from the force's football unit, said: "A ban is there for a reason and this should serve as a strong warning that anyone who tries to breach their FBO will be caught and face further punishment."

"The orders are not only given to people convicted of violence or disorder at matches but anyone who commits a football-related offence such as fighting or damaging property in a pub whilst watching a match."

Richardson was given the FBO after being involved in 20 football-related disorders between 2008 and 2015, most of them at Wolves matches and also during an England match in Poland.

# Advice offered to small businesses

BUSINESSES and social enterprises in the Dudley borough have the chance to win £1,000 worth of advice during the council's Small Business Week.

It runs from Monday to Friday, and will include 'innovation dens' aimed at people with new ideas for products, looking to set up a new business, or considering expanding or changing direction.

Experienced business owners and consultants will have ideas pitched to them and the offer advice. One will receive further in-depth business advice. The dens are 10am to 1pm on Monday at Halesowen Library, Tuesday at Dudley Library, Wednesday at the Savoy Centre in Netherton, Thursday at Brierley Hill Library and December 2 at Stourbridge Library. Book via [eventbrite.co.uk](http://eventbrite.co.uk) and search for Dudley events.

# Support service is given police award

HEALTH and social care staff at Dudley Council won an award for supporting the vulnerable in the borough. Dudley Tele-care Service works with police to protect vulnerable and older people from harm. The project received a Working in Partnership Award from the police.

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# Recycling plant has fallen foul of planners

COUNCILLORS will next week be asked if to launch enforcement action against a recycling firm.

Pegasus Grab Hire Limited has been running a recycling plant despite being told planning permission would not be granted at the site on Bott Lane, Lye, Stourbridge.

The company sought planning guidance about using the site for recycling inert materials to produce aggregate in March. But officers said it would be recommended for refusal as the site and surrounding areas had been identified as locations for housing as part of the Black Country Garden City.

There were also concerns the recycling centre would have an adverse visual impact on the River Stour Valley. A report to the council's development control committee states: "During July, a formal investigation was conducted at the site following a concern that an aggregate recycling activity was operating from the land.

"The investigation established such a facility had already been operational for a period of three months.

"Construction, demolition and excavation waste was being imported onto the site by heavy goods vehicles and associated crushing and screening machinery was being used to recover aggregates and other materials."

The company has installed a weighbridge, water dispenser system, office buildings, a caravan for night security staff and a car park at the site. The operator was warned in writing in August that the current use constituted a planning breach.

## Vulnerable man robbed on bus

A VULNERABLE man was robbed of his phone on a bus in Brierley Hill.

The 35-year-old victim, who has Down's syndrome, was travelling on the 246 bus when he was approached by a man who asked him to hand over his mobile. The robber searched his pockets and bags before stealing his phone. Police have launched an appeal for information about the robbery on October 20 at 3.15pm.

Investigating officer Detective Constable Gareth Homer said: "This is a shocking crime whereby a vulnerable man has been specifically targeted. He was very frightened by the ordeal."

Contact DC Homer by email: g.homer@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk. Quote crime number 20DY/207581M/16, or call 101.

## Ice rink at pub's festive weekend

A PUB car park is to be turned into an ice rink. The Fiddler's Arms, Lower Gornal, hosts a festive weekend with fairground rides and other attractions on December 2 to 4. Tickets cost £7 adults and £5 under-12s.

# 'The Money' man told to hand over £24k

A DRUG lord who had £230,000 worth of stolen cars and goods hidden in a lock-up has been ordered to pay back £24,000.

Ross Richards, of Heathlands, Stourbridge, is serving a 10-year total sentence for conspiring to supply Class A drugs and possession of stolen goods.

The 41-year-old was discovered to be hiding the goods at the lock-up in Wharf Road, Stourbridge, in April 2012. A proceeds of crime hearing at Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that he also used the unit to cover up a drugs racket.

Richards, who owns 29 properties, is worth £4 million. He and his co-conspirators from Birmingham, Stephen Hunt, of Edgehill Road, West Heath; Eamon Henry, of Marston Road, Weoley Castle; and

Laura Simmons, of Sir Hiltons Road, West Heath; were all found guilty of conspiring to supply cocaine in 2014 after a three-month trial. Richards was also found guilty of possession of stolen goods.

Richards told police that he was asked to look after the stolen goods for people who were 'higher up the chain'.

After the items were returned to their respective owners, it was agreed that the amount that Richards profited by was £24,331. He was sentenced in January 2014 for his crimes, but proceeds of crime was delayed until the completion of a related trial.

On April 24, 2012, police had attended the unit and discovered a large amount of stolen property. There were vehicles – one of which had been stolen

the day before. In total, the vehicles totalled £68,000 and altogether the goods discovered were worth in the region of £230,000.

He gave evidence at his trial of his extensive property portfolio and how he bought properties and rented them out. He was known as 'The Money'.

His defence at trial was that he was a successful businessman who didn't need to involve himself in drug dealing. An investigator found that he had 29 properties but money still owing on several.

Judge Michael Challinor said: "Given that he's worth around £4m I don't think he should have a problem paying."

Richards was sentenced to a further six months in prison.

# New group campaigns to save leisure centres

**A CAMPAIGN has been launched by a former councillor to try to save three leisure centres from closing across Dudley borough**

A threat hangs over Dudley Leisure Centre, on Wellington Road, Halesowen Leisure Centre, on Great Cornbow Road, and The Crystal Leisure Centre, on Bell Street, Stourbridge.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council would demolish all three centres due to the cost of repairing them. The three centres will close and two newly-built facilities will replace them in a bid to save the council £1.7m. The new centres would have swimming pools, sports courts and a gym.

Former councillor and cabinet member for environment and leisure, Tracy Wood, set up the The Save Our Leisure Centres campaign. So far 1,400 people have backed it.

Tracy said: "I have been going to the Crystal Leisure Centre gym in Stourbridge for 15 years, so I decided to start an open and positive campaign group to try to keep the centres open.

"With the help from my son, I set up the group and before I knew it we had over 1,400 join.

### Pressure

"I'm going to continue building the campaign and putting pressure on the council to prevent the closures. The centres are good for the local economy and not everyone has a car to travel to leisure centres that are further away. There are good transport links to the locations where the leisure centres currently are."

The three centres would not close until the two new centres have been built but it will mean that one of the borough's three main towns will be without a leisure centre of its own.

The proposals form part of the council's aim to save £25m over the next three years due to cuts.

Tracy was holding a meeting with concerned leisure centre users in Stourbridge last week.

She added: "We're going to put forward some suggestions to Peter Lowe (council leader), listing ways to prevent the centres from shutting."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for economic development and planning, said: "Our current centres are no longer fit for purpose and repairing them as they age is not a sensible or long-term strategy."

"Our communities deserve high quality, modern facilities. This proposal is part of a plan to offer sustainable, high quality leisure service provision for future generations."

The council will get a report on the plans on December 14.



Tracy Wood, front right, with fellow campaigners outside the Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge

## 250,000 new jobs are target by 2030

AMBITIOUS plans have been unveiled to create 250,000 new jobs in the Greater Birmingham area by 2030.

The area's local enterprise partnership says its new industrial strategy will add £29 billion to the local economy, making Birmingham a top global city region in the post-Brexit world.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull partnership – known as

GBSLEP – is the organisation made up of local council chiefs and business bosses with the task of creating jobs.

The plan aims to build on growing advanced manufacturing, life sciences, financial services and the digital and creative industries.

The LEP says its new Strategic Economic Plan will make Birmingham a 'driver' of the

UK economy outside of London by 2030 as part of the new West Midlands Combined Authority, alongside the Black Country and the Coventry & Warwickshire area.

Steve Hollis, chairman of the GBSLEP, said: "Following the Brexit vote, it has never been more necessary to ensure growth in job creation, output and employment."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Dickinson brings Real Deal to town

TV show Dickinson's Real Deal is coming to Halesowen College where host David Dickinson and the dealers will be on the hunt for antiques and other special items.

The show is currently one of the most popular daytime shows on ITV, watched by over a million people.

Free valuations will be available on Saturday from 9am to 5pm. For more information call 0117 970 7618 or email: dickinsonsrealdeal@rdftv.com and a form of photo ID and proof of address is required for those taking part in the show.

## Backing for new homes scheme

PLANS up to 200 homes in Kingswinford have been recommended for approval for a second time.

The application had been deferred at Dudley Council's last development and control committee meeting because of concerns about building housing near a 200-year-old brickworks, which is still in operation. Members agreed on a site visit before making a decision at their meeting on Tuesday.

Kingswinford's Councillor Patrick Harley said: "We do need more local housing but we also need to be considerate of the existing businesses."

## College is joint third out of 213

DUDLEY College is celebrating after being named joint third place in a league table of national Further Education Colleges.

Dudley College came joint third in the table published by FE Week, which scored all 213 colleges in the country.

Colleges were marked on the volume of apprenticeships, employer and learner satisfaction scores and whether their students become employed.

## Keep dancing... and drinking your tea too

A NEW weekly tea dance has been launched in a Black Country town centre.

Dancers are getting together to skip the light fantastic at the Cornbow Hall, in Halesowen, every Thursday.

Sessions will run each week from 2pm to 4pm.

Admission is £3 per person and includes tea and coffee.

For further information about the tea dance and how to get involved call (01384) 812814.

## St Peter's Yule fair

GET festive at a Christmas fair being held in aid of church funds in Dudley.

The fair will be taking place in St Peter's Church Hall, in Kent Street, Upper Gornal, on Saturday, offering the chance to buy Christmas treats.

Doors open at 10.30am and the festive event will continue until 2.30pm.

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LET me tell you what would happen in a real-life version of the John Lewis Christmas TV advert which shows creatures happily bouncing on a trampoline. The foxes would eat the squirrels. The badgers would eat the hedgehogs. The badgers would then chase the foxes off the trampoline and mark their territory by pooping all over it. The family's boxer dog, smelling the badger dung, would then mark the place by peeing on it. By daybreak the much-awaited Xmas present would look like a cross between an abattoir and a sewage works, and you wouldn't let your kids anywhere near it.



SCIENTISTS in Switzerland warn that some red squirrels have leprosy and should not be touched. On the other hand, if you slip a leprosy squirrel half a denarius, he might tell you his life story. But only if you're a Monty Python fan.

MARK Woods took his sick old dog Walnut for one final walk on the beach at Newquay before taking him to the vet to be put down. Mark, whose 18-year-old whippet was paralysed after a series of strokes, says he was amazed that hundreds of people and their dogs responded to his Facebook message and took part in this last act. He should not be so surprised. The bond between man and dog goes back thousands of years and there is no partnership quite like it between any other species on this planet. It began with us feeding them and them helping with our hunting. It evolved into the deepest affection. I know an old man whose beloved labrador died four years ago. Every night as he goes upstairs to bed he still says "Good night, Charlie" to the dog he shared his life with.

TAKE a large pinch of salt with this week's news that dementia has become the biggest cause of deaths in the UK. It is only the biggest if you split all the cancer deaths into separate forms of cancer. If you total them up, as most people do when referring to the Big C, then cancer is still more likely to kill you than dementia.

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

# City gets tough on bikers and car cruisers

**SPEEDING drivers who race on the region's highways face being jailed under a new injunction banning car cruising and menacing motorbikers across Birmingham.**

The High Court order – secured by Birmingham City Council and West Midlands Police – means anyone caught racing or joining unauthorised vehicle rallies on the city's streets will be held in contempt of the ruling and can be hauled before a judge.

By David Cosgrove

The order spans the whole of Birmingham and also covers wider anti-social motoring, such as convoys, stunts, revving engines, blaring horns and playing loud music at vehicle gatherings.

The order, which runs for three years, came into force at the end of last month and follows similar injunctions granted to the Black Country and Solihull.

### Fines

West Midlands Police Superintendent Dean Hatton, Head of the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG), said the order will help the force tackle drivers who flout highways rules and use public roads as race tracks.

He said: "We've taken strong action in the past on street racers, with hundreds taken to court, banned from the roads and handed hefty fines. But recently we have started to see groups of bikers – many on scramblers

and mini motos – causing a nuisance on our streets, pulling wheelies and intimidating other drivers.

"This injunction will cover all aspects of anti-social motoring, including people who organise or promote road cruising events."

Roadside signs will be erected along main routes in the city and thousands of posters will warn of the injunction.

Police said the Black Country road ruling – introduced in February 2015 – has resulted in a 'significant downturn' in street racing and seen 11 people convicted of contempt of court by breaching the order.

Councillor Waseem Zafar, member for transparency, openness and equality, said: "Anyone who races on Birmingham's roads needs to know they will be prosecuted, are likely to lose their licence, face a fine and possibly imprisonment."

## Guide dog helps health worker



Paul Bytheway meets Tim the guide dog with Sue Thomas

A HEALTH trust has welcomed a guide dog as its first ever canine recruit – much to the delight of staff and patients.

Tim the German shepherd helps eye clinic liaison officer Sue Thomas in her work at Russell's Hall Hospital. Sue is registered blind and is based in the ophthalmology department.

Due to her sight loss she has found it hard to access other areas of the hospital, so Tim has been recruited to help. Previously Sue had a sighted guide to help her get round the hospital.

Sue said: "Now I have Tim on hand to help, I can be more independent in my work. I can move around the busy hospital corridors with confidence. Tim has made a huge difference to my life, both on a professional and personal level."

Paul Bytheway, chief operating officer at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, spent time with Tim during the dog's first few weeks at the hospital. He has seen the positive impact that the guide dog has had on both the patients and visitors at the busy facility.

## More than 200 fines for going on holiday

MORE than 200 fines were handed out to parents across Sandwell in the last school year for taking children on holiday during term time.

Sandwell Council raked in £12,960 after dishing out 216 fines.

A Freedom of Information request has also revealed the council pursued 158 prosecutions against parents for taking their children out of school without permission in the last academic year.

Councillor Preet Gill said: "Whilst I understand that to parents this might seem excessive, they need to consider the impact of taking a child out of school during term time, on the child."

"We want children in Sandwell to have the best education they can, but they need to be in school for that to happen."

The fines, known as Education Penalty Notices, were first introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in an effort to stop children taking time off school without good reason.

It is up to the head teacher or principal to decide if an absence is authorised or not.

If it is not, a penalty notice will be issued with a fine of £60 per parent, per child, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Data shows that across the UK councils issued more than 114,000 such fines in the last academic year.

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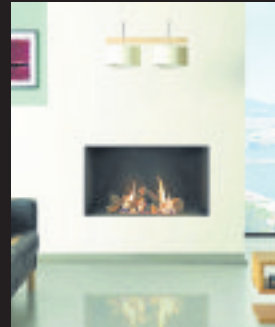
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## MP criticises pharmacy funding cuts

A BLACK Country MP has urged the Government to stop proposed cuts to pharmacies as he fears it could lead to more winter deaths.

Dudley North's Ian Austin has hit out at Government plans to cut funding for community pharmacies by £170 million, a move which he says could force up to 3,000 local pharmacies to close. He said a package of emergency funding will benefit only one per cent of pharmacies across Dudley – compared to 40 per cent in Chesham and Hampshire.

The MP sent out a survey to thousands of Dudley residents and a massive 97 per cent replied that they opposed the funding cuts.

Mr Austin has taken the battle to Westminster, speaking in the Commons he said: "One way of preventing excess winter deaths would be to ensure that people can go to their local pharmacy for advice, essential medicines and flu vaccines. But plans to cut pharmacy budgets are going to hit Dudley hard."

He urged the minister to 'listen to people in Dudley and sort this out?'

Health Minister Philip Dunne said NHS England and Public Health England had launched the Stay Well This Winter campaign, extended the free flu vaccine for children, as well as providing winter fuel payments and warm home discount scheme.

## Orchestra is to play Led Zeppelin classics

A 35-piece orchestra will play some of Led Zeppelin's classic songs in Birmingham.

Tickets are on sale today for the The Led Zeppelin Masters concert, which features the Black Dog Orchestra. The concert will be held at prestigious venue Symphony Hall on April 25.

# Teenage burglar is found asleep in stolen £25k BMW

## Watch out, the witches are about



Dudley Little Theatre members Julie Bywater, Harry Cleve and Jane Fisher in a scene from *The Witches*

A THEATRE group is staging a play version of a Roald Dahl classic scary tale for children, *The Witches*, in Netherton.

Dudley Little Theatre, which will be celebrating its 70th birthday next year, is performing *The Witches* from December 8 to December 11 at Netherton Arts Centre.

*The Witches* tells the story of a young boy and his grandmother in a world where child-hating evil witches secretly exist.

### Centenary

Dudley Little Theatre's Chris Ridgeway said: "We chose the play because of it being the Roald Dahl centenary

year and, of course, a very popular book."

Evening performances take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7.30pm, plus Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2.30pm.

Tickets are £8, concessions £7, see website [www.dudleylittletheatre.org](http://www.dudleylittletheatre.org) or call Chris on 07582 318017.

A BURGLAR stole a £25,000 BMW from a home only for police to arrest him the following morning when they found him asleep in the car.

Haytham Muflihi broke into a house in Halesowen where he took the keys to the expensive 4 Series.

The 19-year-old of no fixed address then went about trashing the car with his friends during the night.

A member of the public reported a group of youths fleeing the BMW in the Blackheath area the next morning and police recovered the severely damaged car, finding Muflihi asleep inside.

DNA matching his was recovered from a window at the home in Summerfields Avenue, Hurst Green, which he targeted on September 17.

Muflihi pleaded guilty to burglary but was spared time in detention after being sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Stephen Cadwaladr, defending, claimed the teenager had gone 'off the rails' since trying to contact his biological mother last year.

He told the court: "Prior to a period of bad behaviour this year, he has never been in trouble. His father recognises the problems that have caused him to go off the rails."

### Issues

Judge Simon Ward decided not to impose an immediate custodial sentence, sentencing him to eight months at a young offender institute suspended for two years.

The teenager appeared via video-link from HMP Brinsford.

He will also have an electronic tag fitted to make sure he adheres to a 12-week curfew. Muflihi must also carry out 100 hours of unpaid work and attend a 21-day rehabilitation course.

## Hundreds at ex-Villa ace's funeral service

A CHARISMATIC soul who enriched everyone's lives with intellect, insight and warmth – one of the tributes paid to former footballer Dalian Atkinson at his funeral in Shropshire.

Hundreds of fans, footballers, friends and family gathered at Telford Crematorium this week.

The 48-year-old died after police were called to the street where he grew up, Meadow Close in Trench, Telford, on August 15. He became unresponsive after being stunned with a Taser. The incident is being investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

The former Aston Villa striker died despite the efforts of hospital doctors.

Ugo Ehiogu, Ian Taylor, Steve Staunton, Gary Charles, Ken McNought, Gordon Cowans, Tommy Johnson and former boss Brian Little were among the former Villa stars at the humanist funeral service.

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## IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



# Now spend on helping pub bomb families

THE Iraqi Historic Allegations team was set up at a cost of £57 million to investigate claims that British troops had abused Iraqi prisoners. It is thought that virtually all of the cases it has been called to investigate will be thrown out during the next few months.

The Al-Sweady inquiry, which cost £25 million, was set up to investigate allegations of torture and murder by British troops in Iraq. After five years it found the torture and murder allegations were "wholly without foundation and entirely the product of deliberate lies, reckless speculation and ingrained hostility".

Meanwhile, the families of those killed in the Birmingham pub bombings, 42 years ago this week, have been granted only partial legal aid in their fight to establish how their loved ones died. And more than four decades on, it seems we are no nearer to seeing their killers brought to justice.

This week, Birmingham Council granted the 21 victims the freedom of the city. It is a nice gesture, but they will never be able to enjoy the freedom that those who planted the bombs are still presumably enjoying to this day.

Isn't it rather sad that we seem to be much hotter at investigating those who seek to protect our country than we are towards those who seek to destroy it.

□ □ □

A BOOKIE last week pointed out that a £5 accumulator on Leicester City winning the Premier League, Britain voting for Brexit and Donald Trump becoming US President would have netted a hypothetical punter a cool £15 million.

I wonder how much you would get if you then went on to bet on a general election next year, Jeremy Corbyn becoming prime minister, and Wolves and Aston Villa both getting promoted? OK, sometimes you need to quit while you're ahead.

□ □ □

HERE we go again. According to those renowned social commentators at Bisto, Wolverhampton is the least friendly city in the UK. The subsidiary of the Premier Foods conglomerate says that just 32 per cent of Wulfrunians have a neighbour they could call for help if they lost their key, and just 16 per cent engage in social activities in their neighbourhood. With a sample size of just 4,000 across the UK, and small margins of difference between the supposedly friendliest and least friendly cities, it seems hard to justify such sweeping generalisations.

And then we get to the crux of the matter. Only 10 per cent invited a neighbour to their home for a meal in the past year.

Really? But I bet when they did they made them real gravy.



Animal lover Angela with Skippy settled nicely in a hammock



Angela with a tiger cub



Follow the leader – Angela Potter with a baby wallaby

# Safari, so good after four decades at park

For Angela, the head of wildlife operations, it is more than just a job, it is a way of life, as SUE SMITH finds out

**A YOUNG woman who took on a temporary summer job at West Midlands Safari Park now holds one of the top roles at the attraction nearly 40 years later.**

Ensuring the animals are ready to face the challenges of the harsh winter months is the job of Angela Potter, the head of wildlife operations and she will be joining the Talking Point team for our sister daily the Express & Star.

Angela has actually lived on the park site for 25 years and can be the first to be called out if there are any problems.

## Dedicated

She arrived for a six-week summer job in the Pets Corner area in 1979 and decided to stay and not return to agricultural college.

Since then she has been a keeper in the reserves and gone up the ranks to become head keeper, responsible for the hoof stock, and about two years ago took over as head of wildlife operations from Bob Lawrence, who recently retired.

Angela's whole life is dedicated to animals and at home she keeps goats, a cockatoo, dogs and hens. She said: "I joined the park in Pets Corner and never left and I suppose I felt that I had found my forte."

"Every day is different and all the time I have been here there has never been a day when I did not want to go to work. I still get excited about the animals and their antics."

"It's more than a job, it's a way of life," she added.

"During my time at the park I have hand-reared many animals and kept wallabies in



Up close and personal – Angela and Wally, a wallaby joey at the safari park

pouches which I carried around with me.

"But my favourites are the giraffes because I have worked very closely with them."

"I also believe that the animals definitely know the keepers and their green uniforms. We are definitely regarded as part of their families."

"Although I left agricultural college to stay

on at the park I do believe it is important to study and gain a scientific background to get to the top."

She has taken her own advice and gone on to study for an Open University science degree, a Zoo Animal Management course and a degree in zoo resource management.

Angela's 19-year-old daughter, Shannon,

seems to be following the same route and works in the cashier's office at the park while currently studying for an Open University course.

Angela said: "At the moment we are expecting to be busy with the Santa Safari and I am looking forward to keeping readers up-to-date with what is happening at the park."

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# Christmas is no longer fun for shop staff

AS Christmas is getting nearer the adverts for the big stores are appearing on TV. Many of them are promoting a family Christmas with mum and dad happily entertaining guests, all full of Christmas Joy.

How lovely it would be if these stores practised what they preached and gave the staff working for them the chance to do just this.

After 20-plus years working in retail I can tell you that with up to midnight opening, no holidays to be taken during December, days so busy you hardly have time to breathe let alone take a

break, when Christmas Day finally arrives, all you really want to do is sit down and do nothing.

Then after they have taken every bit of your time and energy in the run up to Christmas, yes, Boxing Day you will back again.

Then comes New Year's Eve, and again the shop staff have to make a choice, either go for it and suffer the next day, trying to work half asleep or suffering the effects of a glass too many.

Or you can be a party pooper and cut short your celebrations to be bright

and cheerful for all those sad people who have nothing better to do than wander round shops on New Year's Day, usually grumpy and hungover.

Only emergency services should have to work or be on standby on Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The opening of shops is completely unnecessary and I would hazard a bet that the boys at the top, who decide all these opening hours, are not at work – they will be enjoying what the shop staff long for.

JENNY JAMES  
Wordsley

## Needs of the many ignored

THE two main political parties have left the people of this country down with major blunders.

First, the stopping of national service in 1960. The rumour at the time was sons of MPs complained that the two years' service interrupted their university education. So it was stopped.

The many were let down by the selfish few, as usual.

Second, the banning of hanging. It was said in Parliament it was barbaric. That's a matter of opinion.

Today, because of this, many people are subjected to barbaric behaviour.

The rule of law does not exist because there is no backbone in Parliament.

People who have a right to live out their lives in safety.

MPs are voted in by the people, for the people, not their own self interests.

The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

B LAWLEY  
Bilston

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

Dudley Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

### EMAIL

dudley.chron@  
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

## Goose, not dog, poop is the main problem

IT was with total amazement that I read your headline: 'Parks dog ban is here to stay'.

As a regular dog walker at Himley Hall I can assure you that during the summer at no time was there more than a couple of people using the dog ban area. There were a great many families with children around the pool area walking through piles of goose droppings.

It is obvious that children will want to be near the water and to feed the ducks. The only time the dog ban area was busy was when it was used as a car park for different events.

It is very easy to come up with favourable statistics when only one side of the argument is consulted. I know of no dog walkers that were asked their opinion. We use the park all year round, not just a couple of days during the summer, and have to walk our dogs through areas covered in goose droppings.

Khurshid Ahmed has been asked on a number of occasions to come to the park but has never responded. It would be very interesting to know how they obtained these figures and some evidence of it.

D WHITE  
Russells Hall

## Thanks to everyone at service

ONCE again my sincere thanks to all who attended our Remembrance Day Parade and Service of Remembrance at the Brierley Hill cenotaph and church.

To all the wreath layers and representatives from the local services, the police, fire and ambulance, our local councillors and of course our Guiding and Scouting groups and our local citizens and the many parents.

Many thanks also to our local vicar and the excellent trumpeter – well done both.

A special mention if I may to the young girl who made such a good job of lighting the candles representing the Military and Civilian Services involved in the conflicts (could there be a helper's badge for her uniform perhaps?).

Once again, my sincere thanks to all involved.

RON GREENFIELD  
STANDARD BEARER  
Brierley Hill

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# New era for Hippodrome as campaigners take over venue

**CAMPAIGNERS are days away from taking over Dudley Hippodrome – bringing the reopening of the venue a step closer.**

Members of the Black Country Hippodrome group have revealed a lease has been agreed with Dudley Council and will be signed off this week.

That means the group will take the reins of the venue from council bosses and can set in motion plans to get the historic theatre and concert venue back up and running.

The campaigners who want to re-

vitalise the dilapidated building, and rebrand it Black Country Hippodrome, were hoping to have the keys months ago. Negotiations over the lease dragged on due to various complications.

A crunch meeting between council bosses and campaigners saw the final details thrashed out. Both sides have now agreed a five-year lease, says Hippodrome board member Steve Daniels.

That means the keys to the venue should be in the hands of the Hippodrome group this week and the first steps can be taken to get the venue open as a theatre for the first time in decades.

Architects will come up with plans for the revamp of the iconic Castle Hill building, while fundraising plans to pay for the work will be put in place.

Mr Daniels explained: "There was a four-hour meeting and we shook hands afterwards on it and now we're really rocking and rolling."

"We thrashed out all the things we needed to and it's all sorted. Our next job is to interview architects and pick who we want to take the project forward."

The venue is in need of a complete overhaul having been closed for seven years after last being used as a bingo hall. It has not been a theatre since the 1960s. Before then it had hosted such stars as Laurel and Hardy, Gracie Fields, George Formby and Ken Dodd.

The group has said it needs around £5 million to restore the Hippodrome to its former glory. One plan is to allow people and companies to sponsor seats.

The building was two weeks away from being bulldozed to make way for a public open space when campaigners stepped in earlier this year.

## Art on show at The Portal

BRIERLEY Hill's Nine Locks Art Group is showing artworks at Dudley Canal Trust's Portal building, off Birmingham New Road.

Tutor Tim Nash leads the artists who meet each Monday at Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

Holly Wain, heritage activities assistant at Dudley Canal Trust, said: "We're so excited for Nine Locks Art Group to be exhibiting at the Portal. This is a great opportunity to support local artists and perhaps encourage visitors to get involved in joining an art group."

The exhibition is free to visit and it will run until January 5.

All of the original artwork in the exhibition will be for sale. Details via 0121 557 6265 or at [www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk](http://www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk) website.

## Zoo's orangutans star in calendar



Jazz and Sprout pictured by Lancashire photographer Hollie Gordon in the calendar

FOUR orangutans at Dudley Zoo are doing their bit for charity by appearing in a 2017 fundraising calendar.

The four Bornean apes from the zoo will feature in a calendar in aid of the Orangutan Foundation.

The charity works to conserve threatened orangutans and their habitat in the tropical forests of Borneo and Sumatra.

The photos of the Dudley four, Jazz, Sprout, Benji and Jorong, were taken by 23-year-old amateur photographer Hollie Gordon, from Blackpool. She said: "I decided to do the calendar because I love orangutans and wanted to something to try and raise money for a charity who support them."

### Characters

"Dudley Zoo's four orangutans are such characters that they are more than worthy to be ambassadors for their species."

The A4-sized calendars are priced at £10 plus £2 postage.

Rachel Hickman, media and communications officer at Dudley Zoo, said: "We were delighted to hear Hollie was including Dudley Zoo's four charismatic orangutans in her calendar. We're keen to support the fantastic work of the Orangutan Foundation and earlier this year we sent £500 to the charity from on-site fundraising efforts for World Orangutan Day."

The calendars can be purchased through Hollie Gordon Photography on Facebook or via [holliegordonphoto@outlook.com](mailto:holliegordonphoto@outlook.com)

## Online debut for true crime satire show

A COMEDY writer originally from Stourbridge has created a satirical 'true crime' documentary that will feature on the BBC iPlayer.

Céin McGillicuddy has written and directed it alongside his comedy partner, Andy Kinnear.

'Sexy Murder' is a spoof of hit reality crime documentary series, such as Netflix's Making a Murderer and landmark HBO documentary series, The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst.

The 30-minute stand-alone episode is due to be released on BBC iPlayer on December 13 and was produced by independent company, Roughcut TV.

This is the second time the duo have collaborated with Roughcut TV following their cult BBC cop-show comedy, Top Coppers, in 2015, which they also co-wrote, edited and directed.

Sexy Murder follows American documentary filmmaker, Christoph Spinetti, played by Rich Fulcher, best known for his role as Bob Fossil in The Mighty Boosh, on his quest to prove a man innocent.

Mr McGillicuddy said: "We love the true crime documentary genre. It's ridiculously entertaining but that's what we found so fascinating."

Now based in London, the pair met as students at Bournemouth University's Media School.

## Retro traders are to turn back the clocks

A TRADING centre will be celebrating its first anniversary with a 60s-themed weekend in aid of charity.

The Emporium in Brierley Hill will host more than 30 traders selling vintage and retro furniture and collectables to raise funds for Multiple Sclerosis. The event takes place at the Dudley Road site on December 3 and 4. Tickets cost £5 on the door.

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# View from above at Merry Hill centre



The drone view of Merry Hill from UAV Filming, as the centre gears up for a busy festive season with longer opening

THIS fantastic photograph offers a whole new perspective on the Merry Hill shopping centre and its surrounding area.

The shots were captured by a drone sent up high above Dudley and Brierley Hill by Christopher Homer from UAV Filming.

The scale of the vast shopping complex is clear with rows upon rows of cars parked up outside.

Mr Homer also filmed the neighbouring Waterfront in Brierley Hill.

The amazing aerial photographs are the latest stunning drone shots taken across the Dudley borough.

Meanwhile, Merry Hill bosses intu have announced that opening hours are being extended for Christmas shopping from tomorrow (Friday) as the malls will open until 10pm on weekdays.

The shopping centre will also open until 8pm on Saturdays for shoppers.

**Grotto**

The shopping centre has also joined forces with toy manufacturer Playmobil to create a unique Christmas grotto experience.

Merry Hill will be offering children the chance to meet some larger than

life Playmobil figures alongside Santa himself, finally leaving with a Playmobil gift.

Rob Pickersgill, marketing manager at intu Merry Hill, said: "Thanks to intu's nationwide scale and consumer facing brand, we've been able to team up with one of the world's best known toy manufacturers to make our Christmas grotto a must-visit destinations for families in the West Midlands over the festive season.

"We can't wait for children to see what we have in store."

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## Reunion bid to track down Royal nurses



This photo was taken by Alison on the day the group had their interviews in March 1990

NURSES who trained at Wolverhampton's Royal Hospital 30 years ago are being sought as part a reunion. The nurses started their training in January 1987, with some nurses already tracked down from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.

Alison Darby, aged 48, of Finchfield, was one of the nurses who trained at that time and has been working to get in touch with her former friends and colleagues. She went from being a nurse at both the Royal and at New Cross, to training in Midwifery before becoming a school

nurse. Alison said: "The reason that I decided to hold the reunion was that I was thinking about it for our 25 year anniversary, but now we've got up to 30 I think we definitely should do something."

Those people who are still being sought are: Sue Henworth, Diane Webb, Alison Jones, Anita Saini, Teresa Lyon, Andrew Wells, Lucy Wade and Sara Newman.

The reunion is at Patshull Park Hotel, near Pittingham on January 6 at 7.30pm. Anyone with any information can contact Alison Darby at A-Darby@Outlook.com

## Gearing up to spread cheer

NATIONAL Express is getting in gear to launch its first-ever Christmas charity coach tour.

The UK's largest coach operator is calling on people in Wolverhampton to reveal which local causes they would like to see supported.

The 'National Expressmas' coach will donate thousands of pounds to local causes – and they are calling on local folk to recommend which local causes close to their hearts, they

would like to benefit from a Christmas bonus of up to £1,000. Chosen charities will then be paid a special visit by the National Expressmas coach, which will see gifts hand-delivered.

The coach company is particularly keen to hear from people who are able to share stories about how local causes have impacted their lives – or those of their loved ones.

Any registered charity with a local base can be nominated.

To nominate, go to [nationalexpressmas.com](http://nationalexpressmas.com) and National Express is

also giving people who nominate the chance to reveal what they themselves would like for Christmas, for a chance to win a festive treat.

The special National Expressmas coach – one of the company's brand new double deckers – will then take to the nation's roads in the first week of December, delivering festive cheer across the UK.

Managing Director Tom Stables said: "Christmas is a time for giving, and to say thank you, we want to give back to local causes – and people."

# Make sure these needy families don't go hungry

FOR most of us Christmas is a time for giving, eating, and spending time with friends and family.

But there are families in the Black Country and Staffordshire struggling to put a meal on the table every day which can make the festive season seem an even bleaker time of year.

This is why our sister daily the Express & Star has launched the Feed a Family This Christmas Appeal which will provide vital supplies to families in need.

Donations of festive food, such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings as well as basics such as canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice are needed. Also non-food items such as toiletries, new socks and small gifts.

### Causes

The good causes being supported are The Well (Home of the Wolverhampton Food Bank), the Good Shepherd Ministry, based in Wolverhampton, the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also be supporting The Haven which provides both support services to women and children who are affected by domestic violence and homelessness.

The campaign has already been backed by Wolves legend Steve Bull and Wolves favourite Mel Eves. Support has also come from Bilston Operatic Company, which staged Our House at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre recently. Donations of food have already started flooding in including support from Lichfield Food Bank which has handed over some of its surplus stock and the 8th Wolverhampton Scout group has given us an array of items leftover from its annual summer camp – hot dogs, spaghetti, cereals, milk and jam. The group has also pledged to hold a separate collection at its group premises over the coming weeks in the hope of



At a drop-off point, from left, Wolverhampton Food Bank Project managers Gary and Caroline Price, Neil Maddox, Midcounties Co-operative Codsall store, and editor Keith Harrison, at the Express & Star

donating more items. Businesses are also doing their bit by hosting donation boxes on their premises for workers to drop-off contributions. Inspired Gaming Group in Showell Road, Wolverhampton and Guardian Locks & Engineering in Willenhall are both helping.

\*For the full list of items which can be donated visit [www.expressandstar.com](http://www.expressandstar.com) The drop-off points are at: Express & Star Wolverhampton head office, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock, WS11 1EA; Express & Star Stourbridge office, 3 Market Street, Stourbridge, DY8 1AB; Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, Wolverhampton, WV2 4NJ; The Co-operative Food, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall, WV8 1DB; The Co-operative Food in High Holborn, Sedgley, DY3 1SS.



With donations are Recce Hancher, Alex Neilson and Taylor Fereday from 8th Wolverhampton Scouts

# Do you have a long-term health condition or are you 65 or over?

## Make sure you get your prescription medicines before Christmas Eve.

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Sanjay Ganvir  
Pharmacist

NHS



# Get set go, ho, ho, with Santas on the run in park

SEDGLEY-BASED sight loss charity, the Beacon Centre, is joining forces with RNIB to hold a Santa Run in Wolverhampton's West Park.

Participants can run, walk or jog around the 5k course – the only requirement is that they wear a Santa suit while doing it. These will be provided by the charities to make sure runners really get into the spirit of Christmas. Those taking part get to keep the suit at the end.

The run takes place on Sunday, December 4, between 10.30am and 12.30pm. A £10 entrance fee will go towards supporting the two organisations.

Youngsters are also welcome to go along with an adult and complete a one-mile lap of the park for a £5 ticket. They get a Santa hat to wear on the way around which they can take home.

As it's a flat course, it is also suitable for those living with sight loss who may want to take part.

Beacon Centre chief executive Arwyn Jones, who is among those already signed up to take part, said: "The Santa Run is a great way to spend time with your loved ones during this special time of year while raising money for two charities that help those with sight loss."

The Beacon Centre aims to help local people with sight loss live fuller and more independent lives. It provides residential services, an independent living centre and community services.

At Sedgley, it also has the UK's first accredited social enterprise opticians.

To book a place on the charity Santa Run, go to [www.beaconvision.org/Event/santa-run](http://www.beaconvision.org/Event/santa-run)



Santas will be lining up at Wolverhampton's West Park for a 5k run in aid of the Beacon Centre and RNIB

# Health chiefs look at modern slavery

HEALTH chiefs have been discussing how to improve awareness of modern slavery among medical professionals across the West Midlands.

A senior official warned there was a lack of understanding of the issue, particularly in the NHS, during a conference in Birmingham last week.

Twelve suspected slaves were rescued by police in Sandwell last month.

Dr Stephen Munday is Chair of the Association of Directors of Public Health West Midlands, which represents Directors of Public Health from each council in the region. He said: "There isn't a great deal of awareness and understanding (of modern slavery), I would say particularly within the NHS and that is one of the reasons why we are holding this conference. More importantly it is about what frontline staff can actually do to both identify and act on the issue."

The Home Office estimates there are 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK, 55 per cent of them female. A third are children and 35 per cent of all victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

# How could he kill our brother in this way?

THE FAMILY of a man brutally bludgeoned to death by a homeless thug he regarded as a friend have spoken of their torment.

Richard Groves had allowed Darren Lander to stay at the flat at Alfred Gunn House in Thompson Road, Langley.

That act of kindness cost the 32-year-old his life as the vicious lodger battered Mr Groves around 40 times with a large rock and a piece of broken furniture during an argument.

The blows fractured his skull in several places and broke ribs, Mr Michael Duck QC, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court.

"It was a sustained attack with over 40 sites of injury with the most serious injuries on the face and head," said Mr Duck.

The 12 minutes of violence erupted after the men returned to the flat together on the evening of May 16.

The beating could have been triggered by an unfounded belief by Lander that money had been taken from his aunt by Mr Groves, the court heard.

Lander made no effort to get assistance as the man lay dying in the bedroom and continued to use the flat for the next two days before calling police to confess.

He told the officer: "I need to be picked up. I have killed Richard Groves in the bedroom of his flat."

Lander was arrested outside the home of a relative in Halesowen.

Mr Richard Carey-Hughes QC, defending, said: "Richard Groves was his friend and he killed him in a serious outburst of temper."

## Life

Lander, aged 28, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to murder and was jailed for life. He must spend at least 15 years and five months behind bars before being considered for parole.

Mr Groves was the youngest of five children and was supported and loved by his family despite falling foul of drugs in his 20s.

Two of his brothers had been helping him by providing furniture for the fifth floor flat the day before his death.

Andrew Lowe, a sales manager and one of his brothers, recalled: "He was the baby of the family who loved his football and was kept on the straight and



Murderer Darren Lander

narrow by his four older brothers. Then he got mixed up with the wrong crowd when in his 20s but he was our brother and we did our best to get him off drugs.

"Our mother passed away unexpectedly on March 12 and her funeral was the last time I saw Richard. He appeared to be doing well.

"How could someone have taken his life in such a violent way? Richard was not a violent man. He would run in the opposite direction if there was any trouble. He certainly would not start it.

"The horror of listening to details of the murder has been a painful experience for the entire family but we have had fantastic support from the police and would like to thank them and our friends for all their help."

Another brother John Lowe added: "Although we will never truly get justice it is nice to know that Lander has got a long sentence and will not be able to harm anybody else."

Lander maintained the rock was kept as a weapon by the victim, who he claimed owed money to a drug dealer. He also claimed to be able to remember little of the assault because he suffered a 'blackout'.

Detective Inspector Warren Hines said after the verdict: "Lander is a violent, unstable thug who, in horrific circumstances, murdered somebody who had shown him kindness."

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## Women's pension fears raised by MP

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has demanded extra support from the Government for Black Country women hit by pension changes.

Mr Austin was speaking in Parliamentary debate on changes to the state pension age for women born in the 1950s.

Government plans will accelerate rises to the state pension age for women, so that it will reach 66 by 2020, instead of 2026 as originally planned.

### Voices

Mr Austin has been working alongside the group Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) to help get their voices heard.

Speaking in the debate, he said: "Women in the Black Country have done their bit, and that is why the Government should be coming up with proper transitional arrangements so that they can plan properly for their retirement now."



The rubbish at Rowan Oak Waste Services Ltd has become a major eyesore in Shaw Road, Dudley

## Rubbish piles on misery for residents near mess

ANOTHER mountain of waste is blighting Dudley – just a few miles away from the site of a rubbish heap which stood for years.

The Environment Agency is taking enforcement action against the company responsible for the heaps of rubbish – estimated at up to 3,000 tonnes – at a site on Shaw Road, Dudley. Rowan Oak Waste Services Ltd has been stripped of its right to operate.

Jonathan Hall, of the Environment Agency, said: "Rowan Oak Waste, Shaw Road, previously held a permit allowing them to receive waste at the site."

"Earlier in the year we took action with the operator over the volume of waste they were storing. Our aim was to get the operator back into compliance and within their permit conditions as soon as possible."

"As soon as we knew this was not going to be successful we took enforcement action against the company."

It comes less than three weeks after the last rubbish was finally removed from the former RDF site in Brierley Hill, at a cost of £2 million to the landowner.

### Aware

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services said: "Enforcement responsibility for the site is with the Environment Agency and we are in regular contact with them to resolve the issue."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said he would be raising the issue in Parliament.

No one could be contacted from Rowan Oak for comment.

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## Dog ban at Himley grounds is challenged

A DOG owner has hit out at a decision to permanently ban pets from using certain sections of a popular park.

Dudley Council, which runs the park, has confirmed that following its trial of a dog free zone in Himley Park, which started in February, it had decided to keep the ban in place.

The authority said it made the move after 78 per cent of people the council surveyed supported the dog free area.

The survey, however, has been challenged by dog owner Cath Molineux, who said: "I don't believe it and I would question its robustness. I'd be interested to hear how they selected the people they spoke to for the survey, and how many of them were dog owners."

Mrs Molineux, who lives in Coseley, says she enjoys walking her white German shepherd Rosie at the park. "There is a nice dog-walking fraternity down there," she said. "But they haven't spoken to any of us about what we think."

The 54-year-old expressed her surprise that the ban was ever introduced, having not heard of issues between dog owners and other members of the public prior to its introduction.

"There were already areas where people didn't walk their dogs anyway," she said. "I think they have just had this idea and now they don't want to backtrack on it."

Dudley Council said the ban was introduced to provide families with an area free from dogs, where they could enjoy walking, games

By Judith Hawkins

and picnics. The zone, which amounts to around a fifth of the park, stretches from the main entrance to the West Gate, running alongside Himley Road.

The council says it has been speaking to the park's visitors throughout the year to gauge opinion on the trial scheme.

They say that of 251 people surveyed, 78 per cent said they were in favour of the dog free area, with 62 per cent in support of keeping the dog ban in place all year round.

The council said these findings and previous requests from the public led them to the decision to keep the ban in force.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "It is important we listen to people who use the park and gauge their opinion. The survey results have made it quite clear that a majority of people are in favour of the scheme."

Assistance dogs on leads are still allowed in the dog free zone.

## Famous stationery brand to disappear

OFFICE stationery brand Staples is to disappear from the UK after its American owner sold the struggling business.

The UK arm of Staples – which employs around 1,100 staff across 106 stores in Britain – has been bought by restructuring specialist Hilco for a 'nominal sum'.

Hilco said it would phase out the Staples brand in the UK over the coming months.

Staples currently has a branch of the Keyway Retail Park in Willenhall, at Tildesley Street in West Bromwich and another in Kidderminster.

A shop at Merry Hill was shut in 2013 as part of two dozen Staples store closures.

Plans for the store estate and the impact on staff are not yet known.

Hilco is understood to be carrying out an in-depth review of the business over the next few months as it also comes up with a new brand name.



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**BLACK  
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DEALS**



the Mary Stevens Hospice, will start at the Kent Road venue from 7.30pm and will see a line-up of entertainment.

In 2014 the popular comedian passed away at the hospice following a battle against Parkinson's disease.

Earlier this year, a biography written by his long-time friend Angela

Daniels was launched to celebrate his life, in association with the Black Country Society and Morgan Solicitors. Proceeds from the book are also going to the Mary Stevens Hospice.

Tickets to the club night cost £5 and must be booked in advance by calling 0121 422 5157.

**SIX War heroes from the Black Country will be commemorated as part of a project 100 years on from the Battle of the Somme.**

Half a dozen were chosen and the six chosen heroes will be remembered on specially-designed beer mats to be distributed to pubs across the borough.

The poll was organised by Sandwell Council's libraries and archive service as part of the local commemorations of the Battle of the Somme.

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "This has been a very worthwhile exercise to mark the dark days of the First World War and those bloody events at the Battle of the Somme.

"It is an imaginative way of reminding us all of the great sacrifices made by people from the six towns of Sandwell.

"The beer mats will start to be distributed in local pubs in the coming weeks so I would urge people who see them to raise their glass to Sandwell's heroes."

The six people selected were Private Albert Barnsley, of Oldbury, Lance



**Private Albert Barnsley**



### World war nurse Tilly Tate

Corporal Sidney Taylor, of Rowley Regis, Private Harry Bodfish, of Smethwick, Nurse Tilly Tate, of Tipton, Stoker Frank Malton, of Wednesbury and Private Arnold Slater of West Bromwich.

The heroes with the most votes in each town were: Oldbury – Private Albert Barnsley with 54.72 per cent; Rowley Regis – Lance Corporal Sidney Taylor with 38.57 per cent of the vote; Smethwick – Private Harry Bodfish with 47.17 per cent; Tipton – Nurse Tilly Tate with 67.53 per cent.

Wednesbury – Stoker Frank Malton with 48.15 per cent of the vote and West Bromwich – Private Arnold Slater with 36.37 per cent of the vote.

Sandwell's Community History and Archive Service wants any residents with any photographs of the heroes to call 0121 558 2561 or email [archives\\_service@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:archives_service@sandwell.gov.uk)

Organisers of the project thanked people who voted for their local heroes and history groups for their support.

For a short profile of the six heroes visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/localheroes](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/localheroes)

**THE** childhood home of football great Duncan Edwards has gone up for sale.

The terraced house in Elm Road, on Dudley's Priory estate, has been put on the market with the price tag of £120,000 – enough for one of today's top footballers to snap up with a week's pay packet.

The property has three bedrooms and a stylish, modern kitchen. There is wooden decking in the garden.

It was while living at number 31 Elm Road that Edwards honed his skills on the nearby Priory Park playing fields, which would eventually propel him to stardom as part of the famous 1950s Manchester United 'Busby Babes' team.

He was born in 1936 and spent his early years in Dudley before his football skills saw him become a key player for United and England until his life was tragically cut short.

He died of his injuries following the Munich Air Disaster in 1958, aged just 21.

## Plaque

Former teammate and World Cup winner Sir Bobby Charlton unveiled a blue plaque in Duncan's honour at the park just last month, to mark what would have been his 80th birthday.

It was the latest tribute to the Dudley hero, adding to the statue in the town centre and stained-glass window at St Francis' Church.

A major trunk road leading to the town was also named in his honour.

Lisa Flavell, who owns the house, admitted she didn't realise quite how important one of its previous tenants was when she first moved in.

The 34-year-old said: "The last owners did mention it but not being a football fan, I didn't really know much about him."



**His boyhood home – 31 Elm Road**



### Duncan Edwards – Busby Babe



**The stylish modern kitchen at the property, on sale for £120,000**

"But it got me interested and made me want to find out more about him and his life."

She added: "On anniversaries I have had a few people knock on the door asking if they can take a picture of the house. It just goes to show how important he was."

Miss Flavell has lived at the property for nine years and has been joined

in that time by partner Paul Enoch and their one-year-old twins Charlie and Betsy.

The couple have decided to move to a new family home.

Wolves fan Mr Enoch was amazed to discover the house's link to such a prestigious footballer. "He knew all about Duncan Edwards. He thought it was brilliant," Miss Flavell said.

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# Taxi drivers' DVD targets child sexual exploitation

TAXI drivers are attempting to stamp out child sexual exploitation by creating a video highlighting the first signs of danger.

The video, called Deceived, aims to educate drivers and make them aware if they are carrying any vulnerable passengers, and to encourage them to report any possible crime.

Shaz Saleem, chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, wrote, produced and directed the piece with the help of fellow drivers. He said: "This is by far the most important piece of work the association has done.

"Recently, we signed a pledge to tackle this crime but we want our actions to speak louder. The association is committed to ensuring the safety of our customers and we will not shy away from our role.

"Personally I want to thank everyone who has supported Deceived, from the cast to those who have advised and guided us throughout."

Music was created by Falcon Taxis driver, Waqas Rizwan, with the role of the driver played by Amran Hussain from Express Taxis in Halesowen. Lucy is played by Rianna Edwards. Earlier this year the association created a video to make customers aware of the difference between a private hire car and a Hackney cab as part of its Be Safe Campaign.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, said: "The only way to tackle hidden crimes is to bring them out of the darkness into the light and confront them head on."

1 Visit [www.expressandstar.com](http://www.expressandstar.com) to see the video



The role of lead character 'Lucy' is played by Rianna Edwards



Deceived aims to encourage drivers to report any possible crime

# Motorway projects on right road, says chief

**MORE than £600 million worth of motorway projects are making 'real progress', according to the country's top highways executive.**

Jim O'Sullivan, chief executive of Highways England, said five major projects – including the improvement of junction 10 of the M6 between Wolverhampton and Walsall – will bring more jobs and boost the region's economy.

He made the comments as he gave the opening speech of a two-day Highways UK event at the NEC in Birmingham.

He said: "We are currently delivering more than £15 billion of investment in over 100 major schemes across England that will enhance, renew and improve the network.

"It's fantastic to see key projects like these in the Midlands making real progress.

## Strategic

"The Midlands is at the heart of England's strategic road network and investment in schemes like these benefits the whole country. This region really is the 'Midlands Engine' which drives the country."

He said that planning is set to begin next month for the M6 junction 10 improvements with a public consultation launching in January. Construction is set to start in April 2019, finishing in late 2020.

The overhaul will see lanes going over the motorway increase from two to four with bridges rebuilt to ease congestion.

The initial plans are at

By Rob Gollidge

the design stage but will be revealed early next year. More details will be announced shortly of how people can take part and find out more, he said.

The M6 junction 10 currently experiences significant congestion and traffic delays, particularly during morning and evening rush hours.

Road capacity problems have been identified as one of the main transport issues facing the Black Country within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. Highways England is working with Walsall Council to deliver the overhaul.

It aims to remove the need for long term maintenance of the existing structure as well as increasing capacity at the junction and thereby reduce congestion.

It is hoped this will improve access to nearby sites set for development and improve accessibility for cyclists.

He said key progress had been made on the £106m A45/A46 Tollbar End improvement scheme in Coventry.

# Concern over rates of academy exclusions

COUNCIL bosses in Sandwell have contacted the regional schools commissioner over the number of exclusions at the borough's academies.

A total of 105 pupils have been permanently excluded from academy schools in Sandwell over the last two years and children's bosses have flagged up concerns. Academies are not under council control.

Continuous disruption, drug and alcohol abuse, threats towards teachers and fellow pupils were among reasons troublemakers were banned from classrooms. Sandwell Council said it had raised the number of exclusions with the regional schools commissioner.

Permanent exclusion is the most severe form of disciplinary action a school can take against a child. Headteachers are advised only to use the measure as a last resort. But figures for 2014/15 showed 44 children were excluded for 'persistent disruptive behaviour'.



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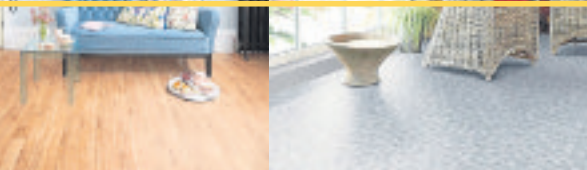
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# Try auction house for seasonal decorations

## ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



**YES, here we are again, already in the thrall of the forthcoming festive season – so I thought this week we'd take a look at what you could possibly snap up at auction to add to those seasonal decorations!**

We always tend to stick to the standard tree with its baubles and tinsel – but why not think about using

lovely displays of winter foliage, berries, holly, ivy and firethorn in some vintage vases and jugs?



Display your scented potpourri, fir-cones and nuts in Victorian dishes and bowls, use little china plates on which to put gold-papered chocolate coins and wrapped sweets.

Utilise cups and saucers as tea-light holders, and look out for reasonably-priced candle-holders – not only for the Christmas dinner table but elsewhere in the house, the traditional 'Wee Willy Winky' single candle holder with handle looks good anywhere.

Also look out for vintage plant holders, these would be great for poinsettia, tiny Christmas trees and decorated displays of twisted willow.

Think about adding traditional, warm colours such as red, green and gold and look out for any items that will do this – little 1950s Pyrex soup dishes are perfect, for example, and vintage wine glasses look great on display.

Again, look out for those pretty vintage bowls in which to display fruit and small table crackers, and if you're feeling particularly adventurous see if you can find a sleigh or toboggan on which to display presents . . . if we get a white Christmas it will serve a dual purpose!



And don't forget your festive dining table.

We're already selling pretty runners decorated with holly and mistletoe (replicas of originals) and china sets edged with gold.

It doesn't have to cost a fortune, or even necessarily match, but old china looks so good on a dining table and will have many other uses throughout the

year, both practically and on display around the home.

Look for assorted vintage plates with decoration in seasonal colours and meat chargers, jugs and gravy boats and Royal Crown Derby fruit bowls and candlesticks (Royal Crown Derby is popular at present).

Small Coalport sugar bowls are great for sweets, chocolates and nuts, and if you find an old soup tureen do buy it – you can still get beautiful Georgian ones, it doesn't matter if the lid is missing.

You can pick up very attractive George Jones bowls, again perfect for fruit, and a brightly decorated Majolica plate would make a nice table centrepiece, complete with tea lights.

Old china baskets are lovely containers for bread rolls, and you might even buy a vintage tea service in which to serve Earl Grey on Christmas afternoon!

**Perry and Phillips Auctioneers in Low Town, Bridgnorth, holds sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, from 10am until 4pm.**

**The next sale takes place on Tuesday, December 6, viewing is during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the sale.**

# Magical time for little children and 'big kids'



What's your festive theme?

THIS week I have seen the first sparkling Christmas trees in windows. Charming twinkling lights over a month before the magical day. My seasonal decorations do not grace our house until after my husband's birthday in mid December, much to the disappointment of our son when he was younger. Every year I dress the tree in the same decorations passed down to me from my parents and aunt, beautiful delicate glass baubles in every colour that shimmer and glint. The rest of the family finding it a massive chore to hang the hundred plus baubles and more than their life is worth to drop and break one!

Today's style is a single colour with sparse large baubles, neatly tied bows and glinting icicles and there is a star topper placed easily on the top. As a child I remember precariously reaching to tie on a tiny fairy with string and wrapping tinsel around the circumference, round and round and round.

LED and fibre optic embellishment of trees and trimmings has given a contemporary look to the overall modern Christmas and our gardens glitter with pretty lights, our houses with festive ambience and perfume. There

## STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



is so much delight in the faces of children as Christmas creeps into their environment.

This year I notice the brightly coloured nutcracker soldiers, tiny to tall, everywhere, a flip back to the toy soldiers from the past. There are hooks specifically to hang the elaborate stockings on the fireplace, garlands to dress the staircase, vintage wreaths on the door, chair covers, table decorations and even loo roll.

Originally trees were decorated with fruit and nuts and then in the 18th century candles were attached to the branches to add illumination until electrification gave us the lighting of today.

Vikings and Saxons worshipped trees and it is believed this is where our Christmas customs came from originally. Prince Albert, beloved husband of Queen Victoria, is credited

with having introduced the Christmas tree to England in 1840 but it is believed it was brought here much, much earlier.

Every store gives over a huge area to Christmas and gives us all an excuse to spend our hard-earned money, there are fantastic selections in Tesco, Asda, Dunelm, The Range, Homebase, Matalan and many more including delightful high street independents. The likes of Hobbycraft allow us to craft our way through the season and give us ideas to create a fairytale on a budget, that is how our ancestors made Christmas so magical.

You may not be an expert when it comes to wrapping the gifts you have bought but the luxury stores will do it for you and alternatively you can buy beautiful bags and boxes, ribbons and bows and the newest trend is 'furoshiki', the Japanese art of wrapping gifts in cloth. Ultimately anything goes, as long as it is enchanting and fascinating, Christmas is for little children and 'big kids' and so much can be achieved with a little imagination.

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Tests indicated that those who have an older biological age can restore a younger pattern of glycans, simply by overhauling their lifestyle

# New test reveals your true, inner body age



Your biological age may be very different

**THINK you know how old you are? Yes, OK, you might know the date on your birth certificate, and the number of candles on your birthday cake – but while these show your chronological age, your biological age – how time, genes and lifestyle have taken a toll on your body – could be very different.**

But now, a new test can tell you what the difference is between your chronological and biological ages – and suggest what you can do if you're much older on the inside than you should be.

**WHAT IS THE GLYCANAGE TEST?**  
After testing more than 40,000 people worldwide, an international research team has developed the GlycanAge test to assess the levels of tiny sugar molecules – glycans – in the blood.

Glycans attach to proteins in the immune system, and form distinctive patterns on the protein molecules. These patterns change with age, and as certain patterns

By Lisa Salmon

are typical at certain ages, identifying how much an individual person's patterns differ from the norm for their age indicates whether they're ageing at a faster or slower rate than normal.

Tim Spector, a professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London, who's part of the GlycanAge team, says: "We have been studying ageing in twins for 20 years and studying many different markers and predictors of age and biological age."

**WHY AM I AGEING BEYOND MY YEARS?**  
"This is the best I have come across to date, although we do not understand the mechanisms yet."

Your genes and lifestyle can affect the glycan patterns in your body and, not surprisingly, the lifestyle factors linked to glycan ageing include smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, poor diet, raised cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and chronic stress.

Another glycan-ageing factor is the drop in oestrogen levels after menopause, as oestrogen protects against ageing.

This means that while men tend to age steadily from their 30s, women often age 50 per cent faster for five years after the menopause.

However, the good news for those who have an older biological age is that tests indicate that you can restore a younger pattern of glycans, simply by overhauling your lifestyle.

**WHAT IS YOUR TRUE AGE?**  
People who want to take the test can do so via one of the health practitioners on the GlycanAge.com website.

The GlycanAge team is still trying to improve its test, and is collaborating with Kings College London on a project to be conducted between 2017 and 2018.

They want to recruit 1,000 people who are undergoing a positive dietary, physical and/or psychological lifestyle change, and follow their progress for three to six months.

Participants who stick to their planned lifestyle change will be offered the GlycanAge test at a non-profit price.

For more information about the test or to register to take part in the project, visit [glycanage.com](http://glycanage.com)



# Shocking film of bus joyride shown in court

STARTLING footage shows a 12-mile police pursuit of a stolen bus, which was driven through red lights in the Black Country and on the wrong side of the road.

With joyrider John Burton, who had been disqualified from driving, at the wheel the bus can be seen mounting the pavement and going the wrong way around an island on the footage, which has been released by West Midlands Police.

The bus, with two Black Country men as passengers, careered through a red light, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard earlier this month. It was driven at up to 50mph.

It went the wrong way round a traffic island, knocked down a sign, clipped the kerb and lost bodywork in a collision with a fence, suffering £10,000 damage – but still did not stop. Burton was even undeterred

when two tyres of the single decker were burst by a stinger laid across the road by police in a bid to stop it.

The vehicle continued on the wheel rims – and even overtook a car – while listing alarmingly and leaving a trail of sparks along Penn Road in Wolverhampton.

The Sandwell Travel bus, stolen hours before the chase from the company base in Tipton on March 30, finally came to a standstill in The Paddock, Bilston, where the driver and two passengers, Simon Loveland, 39, of Dale Close, Tipton, and Thomas Tibbs, 21, of Clinic Drive, Stourbridge, made a run for it but were quickly caught.

Judge James Burbidge QC jailed 38-year-old Burton, of Beaconsfield, Brookside, Telford, for 16 months and Loveland for a year. Tibbs was given a six-month term.



The bus, with two burst tyres, mounts the kerb as the dangerous joyride comes to an end

## Raising a glass to rescued ale festival

THE Deputy Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, will officially open the 31st Dudley Winter Ales Fair.

This year's event runs from tonight (Thursday) to Saturday in Dudley Town Hall.

It will feature more than 80 real ales this year as well as a selection of foreign beers, cider and wine.

Organisers from the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale chose a phoenix rising from the ashes as the logo for the event after the event was initially called off.

It was saved after Jacqui Edwards came forward as festival organiser and branch members rallied round to take on other roles at the event.

The festival opens at 5.30pm on the Thursday and runs from 12 noon to 11pm on the Friday and Saturday.

Holden's Brewery in Woodseton is sponsoring the beer festival which will include a range of stronger brews, session and mid-strength beers, together with new brews from local and national breweries and micro breweries.

For more details go to [www.dudleycamra.org.uk](http://www.dudleycamra.org.uk)

# Number of jobless falls 22,000 to 10-year-low

UNEMPLOYMENT in the West Midlands dropped by 22,000 in the three months to September as nationally the numbers out of work fell to a 10-year-low of 1.6 million.

The region's total was down to 151,000 following an increase in recent months and the number of people in work has risen by 72,000 over the quarter, to 2.7 million.

Nationally numbers out of work fell by 37,000 with the unemployment rate falling to 4.8 per cent with employment remaining at a record rate of 74.5 per cent with 31.8 million now in work. Wages grew by 2.3 per cent and there are more than 750,000 vacancies at any one time.

Claimant count figures for the West Midlands however were up 240 last month to 83,555 – 2.3 per cent of the working population.

In Sandwell the numbers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits rose 100 to 7,225 (3.6 per cent) with Walsall up 45 to 4,950 (2.9 per cent).

### Dudley

The claimants total in Wolverhampton was flat at 6,735 (4.2 per cent) and in Dudley it was down 30 at 5,645 (2.9 per cent).

Cannock Chase saw a fall of 25 to 725 (1.2 per cent), Lichfield was down 15 at 440 (0.7 per cent) with South Staffordshire flat at 720 (1.1 per cent) and Stafford up by five to 670 (0.8 per cent).

Wyre Forest, including Kidderminster, was up by five to 745 (1.3 per cent).

### By John Corser

Employment Minister Damian Hinds said: "Yet again we have a strong set of figures, with employment continuing to run at a record high and unemployment falling to a 11-year low. Growth is being fuelled by full-time professional jobs while wages are continuing to perform strongly, which underlines the resilience of the UK labour market. It's good news in the West Midlands where there's a record 2.73 million people in work, a rise of over 100,000 in the last year alone.

"The measures we have taken have put our economy in a position of strength, and we will work to ensure more people can benefit from these opportunities as we build a country that works for everyone."

JobCentre Plus Black Country spokeswoman Sue Blewitt said that some of the improvement in figures for the area was down to seasonal temporary jobs. "The Royal Mail is recruiting 200 in Wolverhampton alone and Argos and other big retailers are recruiting for Christmas."

## Not guilty is plea on manslaughter charge

A MAN from South Yorkshire has denied killing 33-year-old Karl Swift who was found with serious injuries in a Black Country street.

Dean Hartley, aged 30, of Burnaby Crescent, Sheffield, pleaded not guilty to manslaughter and attempting to pervert the course of justice by making a false statement to police about the death of Mr Swift.

Mr Swift, also from South Yorkshire, died after being discovered in New Road, Halesowen, on September 8.

The defendant was remanded in custody after appearing by video link at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week and is due to stand trial at that court on April 18.

Hartley's father Dean Hartley, aged 51, from Chaucer Road, Sheffield, and Lee Ardron, 29, of Broad Inge Crescent, Sheffield, have also been charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice and are bailed to appear in court at a later date.

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# How do we cope with ladybird invasion?

Are ladybirds really ‘invading’ the UK and spreading STDs? Abi Jackson finds out more

**WELL it seems those ladybirds really did get the memo about flying away home... Except, ‘home’ might well mean your house, or maybe your outhouse or garden shed.**

If you’ve noticed a few more ladybirds around lately – and also that they’re bigger than the ones you’re used to, and may have black wings with red markings, rather than red wings with black spots – it’s likely they’re Harlequin ladybirds. And according to some recent newspaper headlines, they’re ‘invading the UK’ and spreading ‘STDs’!

But what’s really going on, and what can you do if they’re turning up as unwelcome guests in your home? We spoke to Dr Chris Terrell-Nield, Principal Lecturer in Ecology at Nottingham Trent University’s School of Science and Technology to find out...

## WHY IS THERE A LADYBIRD INVASION?

This isn’t the first year we’ve talked about Harlequin ladybirds. In fact, as Dr Terrell-Nield notes, they’ve been here about 12 years, with early sightings dating back to 2004, in Essex. “It’s one of these rather sad biological control stories, really. They come from the Far East originally, brought over to Europe as a biological control for pests on crops - things like aphids,” he explains. “But they were never introduced to the UK. They flew here from the Continent, and since then, they’ve spread to cover the whole of England and Wales and bits of Scotland.”

## A THREATENING SPECIES?

“They can be, yes. Like all ladybirds, they’re very predatory, and they’re also a big ladybird - about the same size as a British seven spot ladybird, and that’s one of our biggest ones - and they eat the larvae of smaller ladybirds. They particularly affect things like two spot ladybirds.”

## POTENTIAL ISSUES

The UK has around 40 species of ladybird and they play a part in pest control in gardens and for crops. “And this invader comes in and upsets the system by destabilising existing populations,” notes Terrell-Nield. “[The Harlequin] likes certain habitats which the others don’t necessarily tend to inhabit. So it can live somewhere they can’t, and also overflow into their habitats and displace them. It could have quite a serious impact on our native ladybird diversity. It’s probably the most invasive ladybird there is and spreads quickly. It also spreads a fungus when it mates, and if that gets out of the Harlequin population into the British ladybird population, that could be an issue.”

## HOMES & GARDENS

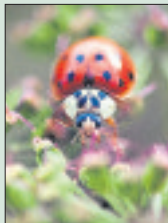
Harlequins are also quite fond of soft fruits, so those with orchards or fruit trees or bushes in their gardens may notice their presence. They’re especially visible at this time of year. “In the autumn, it hibernates and clusters, and comes into houses or outhouses to find conditions where it can hibernate over winter,” says Terrell-Nield. “They’re normally found in the corners of window frames,” he adds, noting they tend to prefer cooler homes rather than very warm ones.

“Essentially, they’re harmless to people,” says Terrell-Nield, but he acknowledges they’re probably unwelcome inside the house, and advises against handling them.

“In general, people don’t like to see a cluster of insects in their houses! Even such nice things as ladybirds, which have got a lot of good press over the years; there’s lots of rhymes about them being helpful for crops and so on,” he says. “The problem with Harlequins, like with other ladybirds, when you disturb them, they bleed. It’s not really blood, it’s a kind of yellowish fluid [which comes from their mouth] and that can stain fabrics and furnishings and so on. That’s a defence reaction they have.” They bite too – but generally only if you handle them and it’s “hardly more than a pin prick”, however, as with everything, some people might experience a more sensitive reaction.

## LADYBIRD REMOVAL

If you want to avoid yellow stains – and nips – it’s best not to handle them. “Use a dustpan and brush, or a Hoover if you really want to get rid of them, and let them go outside,” says Terrell-Nield. “There’s not much you can do which won’t seriously affect other ladybirds - which we don’t want [to happen].”



Cauliflowers, cabbages and sprouts will need a little protection

# Netting will keep pigeons off your brassica crops

## GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Brassicas

AS cauliflowers, cabbages and Brussels sprouts all come to fruition, spend a little time protecting them from frost, pests and diseases to make sure your harvest isn’t damaged.

If you haven’t yet netted the crops, do the job this month. As the weather gets colder and less food is available, pigeons will be increasingly attracted to your crops and can do a lot of damage. Secure the netting at ground level so the birds don’t get caught up in it. Protect cauliflower curds from frost by wrapping their leaves over the curds and tying them in place. And stake tall Brussels sprouts plants which could be in danger of blowing over in high winds.

## BEST OF THE BUNCH – Pyracantha

THIS prickly evergreen, also known as the fire-thorn, is ideal for keeping thieves at bay, thanks to its thorny branches.

But it is also a shrub of great beauty, bearing vibrant berries in autumn and early winter which look stunning trained on wires to form a neat cladding to walls and fences. It also makes an effective hedging plant, grown in any fertile, well-drained soil. Good varieties include

P. ‘Golden Charmer’, which bears clusters of insignificant white flowers in summer, followed by bright orange berries from autumn through winter. P. ‘Mohave’ is prized for its crop of vivid red berries, whose colourful, long-lasting fruits are popular with birds, while P. ‘Soleil d’Or’ is an upright shrub that produces huge swathes of golden-yellow berries.

## WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

- :: Pull suckers away from the base of ornamental trees.
- :: Cut back dead foliage and stems from border perennials.
- :: Prune wisteria to ensure and increase flowering next year.
- :: Check bulbs, corms and tubers in store and discard any showing signs of disease.
- :: Plant remaining tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the garden.
- :: If frost is forecast, insulate pots containing plants of borderline hardiness.
- :: Continue to harvest apples and pears.
- :: Tidy up autumn strawberry beds.
- :: Replace any loose joints on wooden arches and pergolas.

# Treading a fine line as we hover between seasons

## ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall



**EVERYTHING seems poised on the edge of a knife, hovering between the end of autumn and the beginning of winter.**

The garden is similarly poised. There is plenty that is still to be admired but the elements which remain can be overwhelmed by untidy neighbours.

By standing back and taking stock and acting judiciously with the secateurs we can save the best that will carry us through the winter.

I have already decided to take away the majority of the Aster schreberi (now called Eurybia schreberi) before it quickly buries its neighbours with its vigour.

It is a wonderful plant producing white ray florets around a yellow disc in the late summer and makes a wonderful ground cover, perhaps too wonderful in the space that it occupies.

With a little division I can keep it in check and have some to spread around where its prodigious vigour will do no harm. It can be hard to take the chop to one of your treasures but they can become a pest if they kill off their neighbours.

## Leaves

It is not only the success stories that need some attention but also those things that are going back.

Many shrubs and trees are revealing their forms now that they are shedding their leaves and many woody plants can benefit from a good cutting back to clear away dead wood, restore a lost shape or by reinvigorating them by producing new growth. This can be done on an annual or biennial cycle or more sparingly as and when attention needs it. The classic examples of annual pruning are roses or dogwoods and willows grown for their coloured stems. By pruning in winter we can restore the structure that has been lost by summer growth and promote flowers or more intensely coloured stems next year. If the canopy of larger shrubs or hedges is beginning to shade out the plants growing beneath then they can be cut back to let in the light. Very little however can be done about questing roots that are hungrily searching for moisture and food. They should not be cut back without damaging the plant. A generous helping of mulch and a fertiliser such as blood, fish and bone will help.

Some shrubs such as Philadelphus or Deutzia flower on year old wood. They flower in the early summer and are one of the delights of the garden. Plants which flower on old wood should be subjected to a pruning regime which is spaced out over two or three years. The very oldest wood should be removed completely leaving enough one year old wood which will flower and enough new which will replace it. Otherwise simply remove one third on the oldest wood each



Aster schreberi (now called Eurybia schreberi) produces white ray florets around a yellow disc, a wonderful ground cover



Time for some serious cutting back to prepare for winter

year which will have the same result. A word of caution though about evergreens. They should not be pruned at the onset of winter but rather in spring.

They still need to photosynthesise so you should wait until March before getting out the tools.

The condition of the soil is vital and as much work as possible should be completed before the rains set in.

Ground which is wet should not feel the tread of heavy boots otherwise it will become panned. An impermeable layer will be the result of overworking a wet soil which



Philadelphus are one of the delights of the garden

will hold water and impede the growth of plants.

All of this standing back, thinking and going at it is part of the dialogue we gardeners continuously have with our gardens. Sometimes the garden wins, sometimes we do or sometimes a compromise emerges.



# Fans disappointed at FA Cup live TV snub

OFFICIALS and supporters at Stourbridge Football Club have expressed dismay over the decision not to screen live on TV next month's FA Cup showdown with Northampton Town.

Non-league Glassboys are preparing for one of the biggest days in their 140-year history when League One Cobblers visit the War Memorial Ground on Sunday, December 4, for a second-round tie. But the clash will not be broadcast live with BT Sport and the BBC both choosing to overlook it – despite Stourbridge now being one of the lowest-ranked clubs left in the competition.

Ties at Macclesfield, Curzon Ashton and Lincoln City will instead be screened with the broadcasters having made their choices before

Stourbridge defeated Whitehawk 3-0 in a first-round replay.

The decision carries financial implications, with the Black Country club missing out on a £68,000 broadcast fee. It will instead receive £12,500 with their match one of eight on the BBC's Final Score programme on the Sunday afternoon of second round weekend.

Stourbridge chairman Andy Pountney said: "We're delighted to have got this far but I'm disappointed and a little surprised we weren't chosen as a live game. The money for a live game would've made a massive difference."

Stourbridge, managed by Gary Hackett, has been among the most successful FA Cup teams in non-league football over the past decade.



Stourbridge Football Club fans celebrate victory over Whitehawk as they hit the FA Cup glory trail

# Minibus stolen from air cadet youngsters

A GROUP of air cadets in the Black Country are appealing for help after their minibus was stolen.

The 888 (Oldbury) Air Training Corps (ATC), based at Vicarage Road, Oldbury, are devastated by the theft. The loss of the minibus will now make it difficult for members to get to activities.

Thieves took the minibus, which was bought from the Army in 2015, at about 11.30pm last Thursday. Three men attempted to enter the compound through the main gate between 10.20pm and 10.40pm. They returned at 11.10pm, breaking in through a fence. They damaged security lights and then used tools to break a padlock.

West Midlands Police confirmed it is investigating and urged anyone with information urged to contact them on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Pilot Officer Colin Shaw, officer-in-charge of 888 ATC, said: "The minibus was a lifeline for us and is the only way we can transport our 80 cadets to the many activities we do on the weekend. Without it, we will very likely have to cancel a number of events. The cadets worked so hard to raise the funds to buy the bus."

# 'Atrocious' fees for bowls clubs challenged

DUDLEY Council plans to pass on maintenance costs to bowling green clubs in Stourbridge have been described as 'atrocious'.

At its scrutiny committee meeting last week the council was challenged on its plans to pass on the leases to clubs which are part of The Ernest Stevens Trust.

Councillors heard each club was facing around £12,000 annually in maintenance fees as the cash-strapped council could not longer afford to subsidise these costs. Clubs currently pay £750 towards maintenance.

There are four greens under the trust – two at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge and two at Stevens Park in Wollescote.

## Forced

Ken Rollason, a member of The Sons of Rest at Mary Stevens Park, warned the club would be forced to shut as a result of the costs, which were supposed to remain with the council as part of a long-running deed of gift.

He also revealed that quotes gathered by the club demonstrated grass cutting and other maintenance could be carried out for far less, with valuations ranging between £2,500 and £6,000.

He questioned the council's claim that they needed to pass on the cost to save £48,000 a year.

Mr Rollason, aged 68, of Cobden Street, Wollescote,

## By Judith Hawkins

said: "Once they had got that information, they said that they were going to look into it."

Councillor Ian Kettle, who represents the Pedmore and Stourbridge East, suggested the council was not acting in the interests of the public, adding: "They have had this deed of gift for 87 years."

Wordsley's Councillor Matt Rogers expressed his sympathy with the clubs' predicament. "It is absolutely atrocious when the council should be promoting healthy living and exercise," he said.

Environmental services boss Councillor Hilary Bills said: "We are continuing to work closely with local bowling clubs to determine whether they could take over the leases of individual greens, allowing them to manage fee subscriptions themselves and procure competitively priced services."

# Police want to recruit from local community

WEST Midlands Police has started accepting applications for hundreds of new officer roles. The force is looking to take on 800 officers by 2020.

More than 11,000 people have already registered their interest in the recruitment drive, which was announced in August.

Police chiefs have stressed their desire for applicants to be from a range of ethnic backgrounds to reflect the region's diversity.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "It is great news that we will soon be welcoming a new group of recruits into West Midlands Police, which will help us to provide an even better service by bringing fresh ideas into our workforce, directly from local communities."

"It is important that we, as a police force, are representative of the people we serve and, in real terms, that means we need more people from some of our ethnic communities to make an application to join us," he said.



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## Town gets lit up for Christmas

BLACKHEATH gets lit up for Christmas on Saturday with a special event in the town centre.

There will be a festive market, children's rides and Santa's Grotto as part of the family fun from 2 to 6pm.

The lights will be switched-on at 4.30pm by the Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, Oldbury's Councillor Susan Downing.

Meanwhile, tonight (Thursday) is West Bromwich lights switch-on with X Factor winner Ben Haenow, Stavros Flatley and Hollywest Fusion at 6.30pm.

Also tonight Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Julie Webb turns on Oldbury's festive lights at 5pm.

Other festive lights events are being held tonight in Bearwood and tomorrow evening in Tipton and Wednesbury.

## Euro orders boost firm

A ROWLEY Regis manufacturer has created eight jobs after increasing trade with overseas customers.

Cube Precision Engineering, on Cakemore Road, manufactures press tools and components for the automotive and aerospace sector across Europe.

The firm has an annual turnover of £4.5 million.

Managing director Neil Clifton said: "Two thirds of our revenue in the last two years has been from the continent."

## FOCUS ON BLACKHEATH & ROWLEY REGIS

# Council take action in bid to improve eyesore shops

### DUDLEY Council is taking action over eyesore properties on Long Lane.

A maintenance of land notice has been issued to a group of shops in Shell Corner to clean windows, remove waste and take down old out-of-date signs.

It comes after Councillor Stuart Henley, a representative of Halesowen North ward, complained that the area was blighted by dereliction, litter and crime.

The notice, which has been attached to the front of the empty shops, states that the frontages of 303A and 304 Long Lane must have clean windows, frames and cladding along with taking 'all reasonable steps' to clear and remove any waste or litter.

### Clean

Specifies to 303A, which is the former Tudor Law shop, state: 'Remove all signage, clean the front door, doorstep, stall riser and the flashing above the main shop front fascia.'

At 304, formerly Hedzup, broken glass will need to be reinstated, signage removed and the front of shop painted in a dark colour. Litter, waste, rubbish and weeds are also required to be dealt with.

Councillor Henley said: "I have e-mailed a couple of officers to find out when the work will be carried out. The good thing is they have been pushing the owners of

the premises to get them sorted and put notices on.

"The flats above were sold recently and people are moving in, so we need them cleaned as soon as possible.

"They have been bringing the area down for a while now. Unfortunately it seems that previous owners may have not been having much income come in so couldn't really do much about it. We need the area tidied up and the shops are a key start."

Earlier this year, Councillor Henley called for CCTV to be installed in area after residents said it was blighted by 'drug crime and vandalism.'

It came after an attack on a 54-year-old blind man in Belgrave Road, just off Long Lane, on February 1, when an acid-like substance was squirted into his eyes.

A Shell Corner Facebook page was set as well.

By Clare Butler



The shops that are targeted for improvements on Long Lane at Shell Corner as Dudley Council demands action

## Choir sings in concert at church

A CHRISTMAS concert will be held at a Blackheath church next weekend.

Blackheath Central Community Choir will be performing the festive spectacular on Saturday, December 10, at 7pm.

The programme will feature a range of seasonal music. Proceeds are being donated to The Salvation Army and William Booth Centre for the Homeless, Birmingham.

The choir also feature in a carol service on December 12 at 10.30am, which will be free admission with a retiring collection.

Both these events are being held at Blackheath Central Methodist Church, in High Street.

Tickets for December 10's concert are £5 and available from choir members or the church office by phoning 0121 559 1509.

## Festive music at St Paul's

THERE are two big helpings of festive cheer at St Paul's Church, in Long Lane, Blackheath.

Dudley Salvation Army Band will be performing its Christmas Is Coming concert at the church next Saturday, December 3, from 7pm in a free performance with refreshments.

Then on Saturday, December 10, coffee and carols will be offered at the church from 10am to noon to put shoppers in a festive mood.

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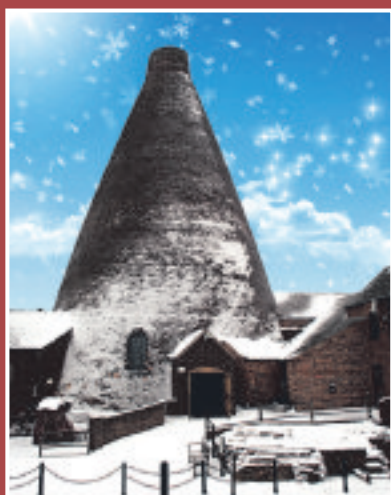
## It's snowtime!

Return of The  
Nutcracker  
- Page 25



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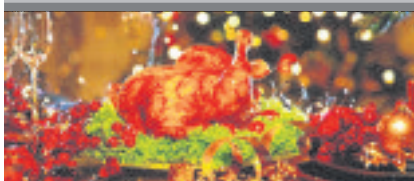
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## Turin Brakes



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Various times  
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton  
A new production of the romantic movie drama set at a 1960s US resort where dance passions run high. Lewis Griffiths as Johnny and debutant Katie Hartland as Baby (pictured).

# Dahl's marvellous medicine is real cure for the blues

**H**e passed away more than 25 years ago, but Roald Dahl remains Britain's favourite children's writer.

His books have sold an astonishing 250 million copies worldwide and The Times placed him 16th on their list of Great British Writers since 1945.

Among his most popular works were James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, The Witches, Fantastic Mr Fox, The BFG, The Twits and George's Marvellous Medicine – all books that mean so much to children everywhere with their ability to shock, frighten and delight in equal measure.

And George's Marvellous Medicine has been brought to the stage at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre, running until Saturday, by the Birmingham Stage Company.

### Temper

It has been adapted by David Wood and features Dahl's amazing story about a young boy who makes a marvellous new medicine to cure his grandmother of her terrifying temper.

But when his grandmother drinks his special new potion, the most incredible things start to happen. And George's adventure has just begun.

George's Marvellous Medicine is one of Dahl's funniest and most exciting stories.

It follows Birmingham Stage Company's acclaimed productions of Horrible Histories, Why The Whales Came and Danny The Champion of The World – another Roald creation.

Writer Wood said he was delighted to work on the piece, which is his eighth Roald Dahl adaptation.

He said: "It's been on tour before and it's coming back. It's just doing a number of weeks. I'm hoping it will be as successful as before."

"I think it's an interesting one really because it's not one of the big titles, like BFG or James and the Giant Peach.

"One tends to think of them as the big ones but this has a great appeal partly because George is being quite naughty in a way and there is a subversive element, as there is in many Dahl stories.



Scary – George's Marvellous Medicine with Ed Thorpe as George and Deborah Vale as Grandma

"What interested me is the fact that the grandmother, who disappears quite magically by the end of the play, is extraordinary.

She's a grandmother who is particularly annoying and he tries to make her nicer. His medicine is not to kill her off, it's to improve her. But it has strange consequences to do with scale as she grows."

Wood says the audience at New Alexandra Theatre will be almost like a football match as youngsters get into the action.

They will shout and scream their support for the lead character, warning him of any danger.

He loves working with Roald Dahl stories, having first adapted The BFG 25 years ago.

"I have grown to admire very much his storytelling skills over the years. He knew what



A tense moment for George as Grandma loses her temper



# It's a cracker of a festive favourite



Jonathan Caguioa as the Nutcracker and Yasuo Atsugi as King Rat in BRB's production Photo: Roy Smiljanic

THE festive season is upon us and that means Birmingham Royal Ballet are returning home to present its annual Christmas treat for the people of the West Midlands, **The Nutcracker**.

This most Christmassy of all ballets is a much-loved family favourite and will be staged at Birmingham Hippodrome from Friday (November

25) until December 13. This world-famous production by Sir Peter Wright, with exquisite designs by John Macfarlane, is acclaimed as one of the best in the world.

Created 26 years ago as a gift to the city of Birmingham in thanks for the warm welcome given to the company after its move from London, this magical production has grown into a must-see treat and a fixture on the festival calendar.

This season will feature the 500th

performance of the production by Birmingham Royal Ballet.

When young Clara sneaks downstairs on Christmas Eve to play with her new nutcracker doll she is swept up in a fantastic journey filled with toy soldiers, wicked rats, a sugar plum fairy and, of course, her handsome prince.

Featuring the romantic music of Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker* is a spectacular ballet that never fails to cast its wintry spell on audiences.



**'Probably my final concert tour'**

## The only way is Essex...

FORMER 1970s heartthrob David Essex takes to the stage at Wolverhampton Civic Hall next week as part of his first major tour in over four years – and he warns it could also be among his last concert appearances.

The 21-date I'll Be Missing You UK tour includes the show in Wolverhampton on Sunday that will see him perform much-loved hits spanning his entire 50-year career.

He shot to fame when he went to an audition for the London production of the musical *Godspell* and was chosen for the role of Jesus. He received major awards and some ecstatic reviews which saw him find fame in London's West End.

Since then he has enjoyed a remarkable career that has combined concerts, records, theatre, composing, films and television. He has written, recorded and produced albums that have sold in their millions.

He's had 23 Top 30 singles in Britain alone. These include *Rock On*, which topped the charts in the UK and the US, selling over one million copies. Subsequent hits followed such as *Lamplight*, *Hold Me Close* and *Gonna Make You A Star* which made the singer a household name and attracted crowds for his concerts that resembled the heyday of Beatlemania.

Acting credits included the movies *That'll Be The Day* and its sequel *Stardust*, and more recently BBC TV's *EastEnders* in which he played the head of the Moon family.

He said: "I'm looking forward to getting back on the road with my band for probably my final concert tour – I'll be missing you."

### Three divas in one tribute show

POP fans get three divas rolled into one show at Bilston's Robin 2 venue tomorrow (Friday). The 3 Diva Tribute will feature Elly Jarman as Cher and Madonna, plus Karin Bello as Tina Turner.

Other highlights at the Mount Pleasant venue include Nick Dagger and his Counterfeit Stones on Saturday.

Liverpool duo China Crisis, who had 80s hits with *Christian* and *Wishful Thinking*, perform an acoustic set on Sunday.

There is a seated acoustic show from 70s hitmaker Steve Harley on Monday. He had top ten success with *Judy Teen*, *Mr Soft*, *Make Me Smile* and *The Phantom of the Opera*.

### Punk veterans to celebrate 40 years

PUNK veterans The Damned celebrate 40 years since *New Rose* at the Wulfrun Hall on Tuesday.

Former Stranglers frontman Hugh Cornwell teams up with the Bard of Salford Dr John Cooper Clarke at Birmingham's O2 Academy on Thursday, December 1. *Danger! Electric Six* play O2 Academy on Wednesday, following sold out shows by Pierce the Veil and Passenger at the Bristol Street venue. 1990s favourites Teenage Fanclub play the O2 Institute in Digbeth on Saturday, where epic synth outfit White Lies play Tuesday and the dramatic *Nothing But Thieves* Wednesday.

### Shiver me timbers, it's Treasure Island

THIS Christmas Birmingham Repertory Theatre is getting ready to set young hearts racing as they set sail for *Treasure Island* from Friday (November 25) until January 7.

Last year saw record numbers flocking to *The Rep* for *The Lion*, *The Witch* and *The Wardrobe*, so expectations are high for another festive spectacular at the city centre theatre.

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale of adventure has been given a new adaptation by Bryony Lavery, whose *A Christmas Carol* played to packed houses in 2013. Stage and screen actor Michael Hodgson will play Long John Silver.

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**ENTERTAINMENT EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT 8PM 'TIL LATE**



## DIGITAL





CHOICE



Gemma Chan

**Humans (Channel 4, 9pm)**  
Leo investigates the Silo and track down the sniper who shot Ten. Hester promises to use peaceful methods in dealing with the killer, but Leo is not sure his ally can be trusted to keep her word. Mia faces falling into the hands of a mysterious organisation, and Karen makes an admission that rocks her relationship with Pete. Odi tries to find meaning in her life, and Sophie is fascinated by Renie's lifestyle emulating synth behaviour. Sci-fi drama, starring Ritu Arya, Amy Athwal-Kirby, Ivanno Jeremiah, Gemma Chan, Sam Palladio, Eric Kofi Abrefa, Lucy Carless, Katherine Parkinson, Tom Goodman-Hill, Theo Stevenson and Pixie Davies. With Nathalie Armin, Will Tudor, Sonya Cassidy and Colin Morgan.

BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Alexander Armstrong. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Film: Enchanted. (2007) Fantasy comedy, starring Amy Adams. **2.55** Flog It! (R) **3.35** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.20** Planet Earth II. (R) **5.20** Songs of Praise. **5.55** BBC News. **6.10** Regional Programme. **6.20** Countryfile. The team explores the Brecon Beacons, where Matt Baker finds out about a new kind of treasure hunt and meets an artist inspired by the night sky, while Helen Skelton helps out with sheep trekking and rescuing fish. Sean Fletcher reports on diversification in farming, Adam Henson investigates a treatment for dogs with cancer, and Tom Heap questions how safe horse riders are on the roads. Including weather for the week ahead. **7.20** Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman present last night's results, and two couples compete in an elimination dance-off. **8.00** Planet Earth II. Footage of animals that live in the desert, including a pride of desert lions that risks hunting a giraffe several times their size. The film also features an immense swarm of locusts, sand grouse flying for their offspring, and an unprecedented recording of a tiny bat defending itself against one of the world's deadliest scorpions. **9.00** My Mother and Other Strangers. A local child falls seriously ill shortly after Halloween. Dr Black admits that there is only so much he can do, so Rose turns to Captain Dreyfuss for help getting treatment. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, including Arsenal v Bournemouth. **11.50** Sunny D. Dane decides to move out of his parents' house, which means he needs to stay on the right side of his boss, who is determined to seduce him. Katherine Ryan guest stars. **12.15** Citizen Khan. (R) **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

**6.00** The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.45** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **8.15** Carol Klein's Plant Odysseys. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** International Rugby Union. (R) **12.15** MOTD Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Coverage of the fifth day at the Barbican Centre in York. **6.10** Film: Deep Impact. (1998) A TV reporter investigating a presidential misdeemeanor stumbles on evidence that a comet is on a collision course with Earth, threatening the future of the human race. Meanwhile, an astronaut prepares to lead his crew on a do-or-die mission to intercept the danger. Sci-fi drama, starring Robert Duvall, Tea Leoni, Morgan Freeman and Elijah Wood. Edited for daytime broadcast. **8.00** The Mayflower. Drama-documentary exploring the truth behind the story of William Bradford and the Mayflower pilgrims, whose voyage to America in the early 17th century is celebrated in the US every year as Thanksgiving. The programme explores the circumstances that compelled them to leave Europe and the ugly reality behind the famous story of their arrival in the new world. **9.00** Whites v Blacks: How Football Changed a Nation. Adrian Chiles presents the story of a famous football match played in 1979 at West Bromwich Albion, in which a team composed entirely of black players took on an all-white side. The game took place at a time when black people were considered unwelcome in the sport, whether as players, fans or for those on the pitch that day, this was a rare and vital opportunity to make their mark on the sport. Adrian reunites players from both teams and reflects on how football has changed in the intervening time. **10.00** Black Is the New Black. **10.30** QI XL. Gyles Brandreth, Victoria Coren Mitchell and Jimmy Carr join series regular Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig in an extended edition of the comedy panel show. **11.15** Snooker: UK Championship. **12.05** Snooker: UK Championship Extra. **2.05** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.00** Holby City. (R) **4.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

**6.00** CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.25** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.30** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Looped. **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Bear Grylls Survival School. **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Let's Do Christmas with Gino & Mel. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **1.10** The X Factor. (R) **3.00** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.00** Tipping Point. (R) **6.00** Regional Programme: Weather. **6.10** ITV News: Weather. **6.30** Off Their Rockers. Kym Marsh reveals her soft spot for Seb, Keith dispenses some career advice, and Dave records a video message for his wife. **7.00** The Next Great Magician. Stephen Mulhern and Rochelle Humes present more spectacular performances, including a magician walking blindfolded through 100 rat traps and a magical surprise for Andrea McLean. **8.00** The X Factor. Dermot O'Leary reveals the results of last night's show, before the lowest scoring acts compete in a sing-off to decide who will be the next to leave the contest. **9.00** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as the famous faces continue their ordeal in the Australian jungle, struggling to complete the tough daily tasks and dreaded Bush Tucker Trials. **10.30** ITV News: Weather. **10.45** Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R) **11.45** Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights from the ninth round of fixtures, including Bristol v Leicester Tigers, Harlequins v Bath, Saracens v Gloucester and Exeter Chiefs v Worcester Warriors. **12.40** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

**6.10** Motor Sport: 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship. **6.35** Le Mans Classic. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix (Start-time 1.00pm). **4.40** Guy Martin's Wall of Death: Behind the Scenes. (R) **5.40** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. **6.40** Channel 4 News. **7.00** The Secret Life of the Zoo. Florence and Nadine, two of Chester's Grey's zebras, are about to give birth, but other animals are struggling to produce offspring, including Iblis the Asiatic lion. Meanwhile, warthog dad Magnum is feeling the pressure of parenting as two of his older children, Dobby and Neville, are becoming increasingly hard to control, and Magnum is losing his hair with the stress. (R) **8.00** Escape to the Chateau. New series. Dick and Angel Strawbridge continue their renovation of a French chateau, 18 months after the end of the first series. So far, only nine rooms have been renovated and many areas of the 12-acre estate have yet to be looked at – but the project is going to have to start paying for itself soon. They make plans to host weddings on the grounds, while looking ahead to keeping livestock and growing their own crops. **9.00** Humans. Leo investigates the Silo and track down the sniper who shot Ten. Hester promises to use peaceful methods in dealing with the killer, but Leo is not sure she can be trusted. **10.00** 5 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Vic Reeves and Aisling Bea join host Jimmy Carr and team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson for more comic innuendos and unpredictable conundrums in the comedy quiz. (R) **11.05** Jon Richardson: Nidiot. A stand-up performance recorded live in front of a sell-out crowd at the Hammersmith Apollo, in which the comic reaches new levels of frustration. (R) **12.05** The Last Leg. (R) **1.10** Film: Beyond the Hills. (2012) **3.45** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Highlights. **4.40** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **5.00** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.05** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **8.30** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** The Gadget Show. (R) **1.00** Film: Twelve Ties of Christmas. (2013) Drama, starring Lindy Booth. **2.40** Film: Once Upon A Christmas. (2015) Romantic drama, starring Tara Wilson. **4.25** Film: Annie Claus is Coming to Town. (2011) Christmas fantasy, starring Maria Thayer. **6.10** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Santa Claus loses control of his sleigh in tricky weather conditions and crashes into a passing car – and the resulting bump on the head leads to a total loss of memory. It is left to a youngster to help him beat the amnesia and deliver presents around the world in time for Christmas morning. Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen, Max Morrow, Tommy Davidson, Stephen Eckholdt and Robyn Lively. Includes 5 News Update at 7.10pm. **8.00** Ice Road Truckers. Darrell braves the roughest trail remaining on the winter roads, while Art braves another open ice crossing for the first time since his recent close call. Last in the series. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Film: Saving Private Ryan. (1998) In the aftermath of the Normandy landings, a group of American soldiers scours the battlefields of France in search of a missing infantryman, who has been given compassionate leave to return home because his brothers have been killed in the conflict. Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning Second World War drama, starring Tom Hanks, Tom Sizemore, Edward Burns, Matt Damon, Barry Pepper and Vin Diesel. Includes 5 News Update at 10pm. **12.20** Film: Flight of the Phoenix. (2004) **2.15** SuperCasino.

DIGITAL

**BBC Four**  
**7.00** Virtuoso Violinists at the BBC **8.00** Classic Albums **9.00** World War Two: 1945 & the Wheelchair President **10.30** Storyville: Bride for Sale – Sonita **11.30** FKA twigs **12.00** Monkey Planet **1.00** Tails You Win: The Science of Chance **2.00** Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom **3.00** Russia – A Century of Suspicion: A Timewatch Guide **4.00** Close **ITV2**  
**11.25** The X Factor **1.10** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **2.15** The Hot Desk: Louisa Johnson **2.30** Catchphrase Celebrity Special **3.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **4.00** Film: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **6.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **7.10** Film: The Waterboy (1998) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: The Waterboy (1998) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.10** Family Guy **10.30** I'm a Celebrity: Xtra Camp **11.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3**  
**12.05** A Touch of Frost **2.05** Film: Columbo: A Case of Immunity (1975) **3.45** Film: Calamity Jane (1953) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50** Film: Calamity Jane (1953) **5.50** Inspector Morse **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Midsomer Murders **12.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **2.00** Wycliffe **3.25** May the Best House Win **5.10** You're Only Young Twice **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4**  
**11.50** Cash Cowboys **12.45** Live Darts: Players Championship. The quarter-finals. **5.00** Pawn Stars **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship. The semi-finals and final. **11.00** Film: Lock Up (1989) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10** Film: Lock Up (1989) **1.10** Fishing Impossible **2.10** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**  
**11.30** Made in Chelsea **12.30** Film: Clueless (1995) **2.30** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Salt (2010) **11.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **1.10** The Inbetweeners **2.10** Crazyhead **3.00** Rude Tube **3.25** Hollyoaks **Film4**  
**11.00** Sahara (1943) **1.00** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **2.45** Carry On Cabby (1963) **4.35** Epic (2013) **6.40** Mission: Impossible 2 (2000) **9.00** Men in Black (1997) **10.50** The Running Man (1987) **12.50** Carlos – Part Two **3.10** Close

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## FILM CHOICES

### MONDAY

#### A Fairytale Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman spends Christmas organising the sale of a mansion and its contents. The aloof owner initially treats her with disdain but they gradually become attracted to each other. However, the budding relationship is complicated when her old flame comes to visit. Romantic drama, starring C Thomas Howell and Haylie Duff. (2013)

### TUESDAY

#### The Cry of the Owl, BBC1, 11.50pm

Troubled Robert moves to the countryside to get over a divorce. He becomes fascinated by an attractive younger woman and the pair begin an illicit relationship, only for Robert to find himself chief suspect in an investigation when her boyfriend goes missing. Thriller, starring Paddy Considine, Julia Stiles, Karl Pruner and James Gilbert. (2009)



Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, Friday, Channel 4, 12.25am

### WEDNESDAY

#### On Strike for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A hard-working mother wants a perfect family Christmas before her two sons go off to college, but is frustrated when they and her husband offer no help with the preparations. She decides to go on strike and do no more housework for the festive season, inspiring her similarly neglected neighbours to follow suit. Drama, starring Daphne Zuniga. (2010)

### THURSDAY

#### Annie Claus Is Coming to Town, Channel 5, 11.30am

Santa Claus's daughter goes to California in search of adventure, and falls in love with the owner of a traditional toy shop, whose old-fashioned business is struggling to make ends meet. However, a scheming elf tries to drive them apart to further his own ambitions of taking over Christmas. Fantasy, starring Maria Thayer and Sam Page. (2011)

### FRIDAY

#### Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, Channel 4, 12.25am

A werewolf leads a revolution against the vampire king who has enslaved his race, starting a centuries-long war. Fantasy horror prequel, starring Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy and Rhona Mitra. (2009)

## New series remembers an infamous case

In 1971, Richard Attenborough starred in the film 10 Rillington Place, and admitted he was haunted by the project and the man he played – John Reginald Christie.

It's a name that still has the power to send shivers down the spine of those who are familiar with his crimes.

Christie was born in West Yorkshire, but in the 1940s and 1950s had settled in London; by this time, he had already been convicted of several crimes, including assaulting a prostitute and stealing a priest's car. On his release from prison, he was reconciled with his estranged wife, Ethel, and they moved to Rillington Place, an address that would become infamous.

This new, three-part drama focuses on a period of 10 years, from 1943 to 1953, when Christie murdered at least eight people, including Ethel. It reveals what happened from three points of view – that of Christie, Ethel and of their tragic neighbour, Timothy Evans.

Evans was a Welshman with an IQ of around 70 who moved into an upper flat at the property with his wife Beryl and toddler daughter Geraldine.

When Beryl fell pregnant again and felt they couldn't cope with another baby, Christie offered to carry out a termination – he claimed to be an experienced backstreet abortionist – but instead administered his own form of 'anaesthetic' before strangling her and Geraldine.

Evans was wrongly convicted for their murders, and hanged in Pentonville Prison in 1953; his carriage is one of Britain's most famous miscarriages of justice, and played a major part in the campaign to abolish capital punishment.

Eventually, after moving out of Rillington Place, Christie was caught after a new tenant discovered the bodies of several of his victims stowed in an alcove near the kitchen. He eventually admitted to killing seven women, but denied the murder of Geraldine; his plea of insanity was rejected during his trial.

"This is a story you just can't look away from: an unlikely serial killer who orchestrated a devastating miscarriage of justice," say the drama's writers, Ed Whitmore and Tracey Malone. "It has drawn us in at

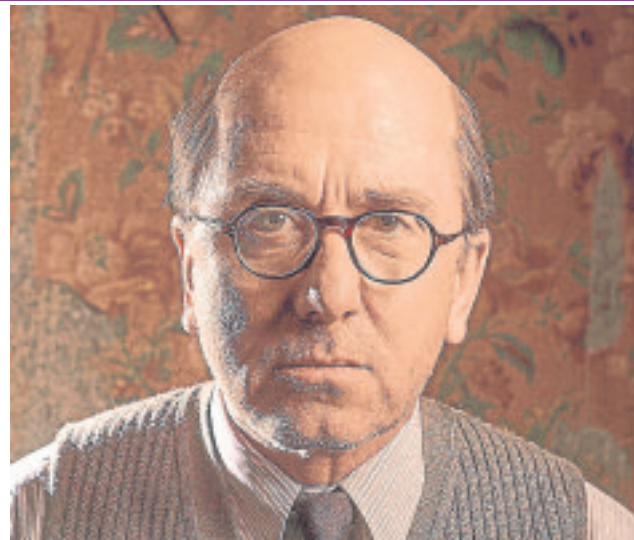
every turn and has attracted an incredibly exciting level of talent who are as committed as we are to bringing it to life."

The house where Christie lived was demolished years ago, so filming has largely taken place in Glasgow, with some location shooting in London.

Samantha Morton plays Ethel, while Nico Mirallegro tackles the role of Evans, who was portrayed memorably by John Hurt in the film version, and Jodie Comer, a hot property following her appearance in BBC3's Thirteen takes the part of Beryl.

"This is an incredible cast," claims executive producer Philippa Giles. "A tribute to the beautiful texture of the scripts."

It's a chilling story, one that is impossible to forget after seeing it depicted on screen. Whether Roth has been disturbed along the same lines as Attenborough was while playing Christie is anybody's guess, but one thing is for sure – it's a tale that will continue to horrify future generations for years to come.



Tim Roth stars in Rillington Place, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

## BEST OF THE REST

### MONDAY

#### Tour de Celeb

##### Channel 5, 7pm

Forget I'm a Celebrity, this new series might just be the toughest reality show on British TV. It sees a group of famous faces preparing to take on the toughest stage of the Tour de France and cycle 140 kilometres of rugged mountain terrain. The celebs getting on their bikes are reality TV regulars Hugo Taylor and Lucy Mecklenburgh, presenters Angellica Bell and Jodie Kidd, sports stars Darren Gough, Amy Williams and Austin Healey and choreographer Louie Spence. They already seem like a fairly fit bunch, but they won't be expected to just start pedalling, as this first episode follows them as they begin training under the watchful eyes of the coaches, who include Olympic cyclist Rob Hayles and Britain's most successful Paralympian Sarah Storey.

### TUESDAY

#### The Secret Life of 5 Year Olds

##### Channel 4, 8pm

For the past two weeks we've followed the progress of a group of four-year-old children, but now attention turns to those who are roughly 12 months older. There's a marked difference between the two classes – the first appeared to be mostly shy and

unsure of themselves, but this time, the 10 children involved are more confident. They're also concerned with asserting their independence and exploring the adult world around them. It quickly becomes clear that charismatic Jude is the dominant personality, and he even begins a fledgling romance with little Ellie – but their bond is put to the test when they are given a crying, lifelike baby doll to take care of. Meanwhile, nurturing Ellie-May takes Daisy, who has cerebral palsy, under her wing, but it's Daisy who turns out to have the greater imagination and may have the ability to influence how the other children play.

### WEDNESDAY

#### Kids on the Edge: Troubled Girls

##### Channel 4, 10pm

Teenage years have always been troublesome, but it seems that hormonal issues and puberty aren't the only problems facing youngsters these days. According to a recent report, around one in three English teenage girls show symptoms of anxiety or depression, with A&E departments claiming that they are treating more self-harmers in this age group than ever before. The

final episode of Kids on the Edge focuses on two such girls – 17-year-old Demi and Maisie, who is 15. Demi has tried to commit suicide twice, and suffers another crisis during the documentary, but is determined not to end up in a psychiatric unit. Meanwhile, Maisie has been in and out of various units for three years, and she and her mother are pinning all their hopes on help from the Tavistock clinic's staff.

### THURSDAY

#### Who Do You Think You Are?

##### BBC1, 8pm

Amanda Holden takes part in the popular genealogy documentary, in which famous faces trace their family trees. The actress and presenter looks into the rumoured French ancestry on her mother's side of the family, an investigation that leads to an extraordinary Napoleonic-era cross-Channel



Tour de Celeb, Monday, Channel 5, 7pm

romance. But she doesn't stop there. The suicide of her paternal grandfather has always loomed large over her family – and when his story takes her to France once again, she is moved to discover how he helped others through a harrowing tragedy.

### FRIDAY

#### Secrets of Great British Castles

##### Channel 5, 8pm

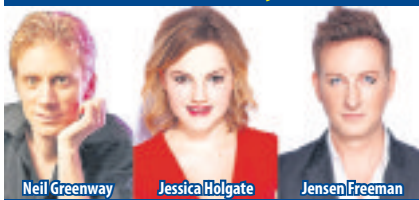
Lancaster Castle has witnessed scenes of historical, cultural and political significance throughout the centuries, including incidents of religious persecution, the trials of the Lancashire Witches and 200 public executions. Owned by the Duchy of Lancaster, it was a state prison until 2011 and is still a working crown court. Dan Jones explores its turbulent history and meets Wendy Robinson, a retired prosecutor from Australia, whose ancestors were sentenced to death at Lancaster Crown Court in 1817 for stealing sheep.

#### Building the World's Most Luxurious Cruise Ship

##### Channel 5, 9pm

Part one of two. Following engineers and designers as they construct the liner Seven Seas Explorer, aiming to make it the most luxurious ship in the world of its size.

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**4:30pm**

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 ★ **Christmas Market**  
 ★ **Children's Rides**

**in conjunction with Tipton Community Association & Brickhouse TRA**

**Sandwell**  
 Metropolitan Borough Council

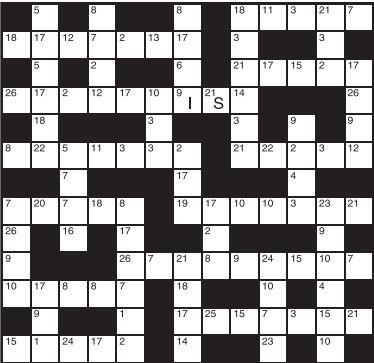
In conjunction with Tipton Community Association  
[www.sandwell.gov.uk/christmaslights](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/christmaslights)



BRAIN GYM No.405

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	Q	W	V	P	B	L	O	K	R	D	C	N	A	13
14	Y	E	S	J	T	Z	H	M	U	G	X	I	F	

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

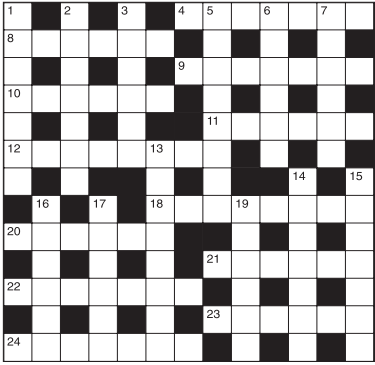
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 4. Its message is a grave one (7)
- 8. Leave the vehicle burning (6)
- 9. Establishing a link with carpentry (7)
- 10. Continually changed course, showing diplomacy, we hear (6)
- 11. They don't do much to earn their reputation (6)
- 12. Not a back-cloth used by yachtsmen (8)
- 18. Wireless user gets a new set in a ship (8)
- 20. Rather sore, perhaps, on entering (6)
- 21. Seek food for a long time (6)
- 22. Put some notes in order? (7)
- 23. Money-making facility (6)
- 24. They may be of untold value (7)

Down

- 1. Mother has a stubborn dog (7)
- 2. Drop from one's hand (7)
- 3. He sets out the bed-linen (6)
- 5. Make professional records as sidelines (8)
- 6. Thrill to some exciting legends (6)
- 7. A poor state to be in (6)
- 13. O.K. there's nothing left (3,5)
- 14. May as well ring off - or ring on (7)
- 15. Checks the work of police (7)
- 16. The way people eat (6)
- 17. Not just lacking in beauty (6)
- 19. A capital fellow with a hard-working reputation (6)



Quick Clues:

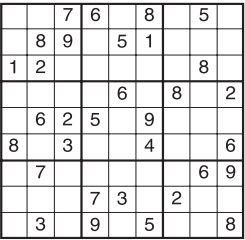
Across

- 4. Malady (7)
- 8. Athlete (6)
- 9. Accomplish (7)
- 10. Dale (6)
- 11. Pour from one vessel to another (6)
- 12. Inert (8)
- 18. Universal (8)
- 20. Treasurer (6)
- 21. Unimpaired (6)
- 22. Unlawful (7)
- 23. Calm (6)
- 24. Cutting (7)

Down

- 1. Overcome (7)
- 2. Soiled (7)
- 3. Discard (6)
- 5. Episode (8)
- 6. Show (6)
- 7. Economy (6)
- 13. Augment (8)
- 14. Flashed (7)
- 15. Strew (7)
- 16. Ill-humoured (6)
- 17. Slumbering (6)
- 19. Desire for food (6)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	8	2	9	5	1	4	3	6
4	3	5	8	7	6	9	2	1
6	9	1	3	4	2	7	5	8
8	2	4	5	1	9	6	7	3
3	1	6	4	2	7	8	9	5
9	5	7	6	8	3	1	4	2
1	6	3	2	9	4	5	8	7
5	7	9	1	3	8	2	6	4
2	4	8	7	6	5	3	1	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Flower stalk; 9 Eye; 10 Downright; 11 Lisle; 13 Refused; 14 Inroad; 16 Estate; 18 Go to pot; 19 Sheaf; 20 Regarding; 21 Tar; 22 Small letter. Down: 2 Lee; 3 Wedge; 4 Reward; 5 Tariffs; 6 Legislate; 7 Bell-ringers; 8 Studies form; 12 Stratagem; 15 Apparel; 17 At will; 19 Sight; 21 Tie. QUICK - Across: 1 Benefaction; 9 Lie; 10 Dismantle; 11 Paper; 13 Tension; 14 Obsolete; 16 Triton; 18 Air base; 19 Peril; 20 Immediate; 21 Ass; 22 Recriminate. Down: 2 Ere; 3 Elder; 4 Assets; 5 Trainer; 6 Outfitter; 7 Kleptomania; 8 Meaningless; 12 Programme; 15 Slander; 17 Becalm; 19 Preen; 21 Act.

Quiz

- 1. Who became potter to George III in 1806?
- 2. By what name was potassium nitrate formerly known?
- 3. What was the name of the ferry that sank on the Baltic Sea in 1994?
- 4. Who was the last Grand Prix world champion to drive a Lotus?
- 5. Which talent show started Pam Ayres's career?
- 6. What did Sir Alexander Fleming discover in 1928?
- 7. To which note does an orchestra tune?
- 8. What do we call the biennial plant Brassica rapa?
- 9. Of which constellation is Spica the brightest star?
- 10. What type of creature is the boomslang?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Joseph Heller; 2 Toronto; 3 Terry Gilliam; 4 Bewitched; 5 Electra complex; 6 Donegal; 7 Jerry Lewis; 8 Malawi; 9 Frederick Delius; 10 Rotary Club. Niner: CREMATION

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 39124967 gives a deposit,
- 3287 gives a second deposit,
- 4533 gives a collection.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Tuck into this special called murg sara



The Garam Masala, Old Fallow Road, Cannock



Inside the spacious and well-lit dining area

Images by Nakhwal.com

# Garam Masala is perfect blend and proves that spice is so nice

IT was perhaps quite fitting that Dua Lipa's hit *Hotter Than Hell* was playing just as I was served my spicy poppadoms.

As it turned out, they were not THAT fiery, but did fit the description. And they whetted the appetite for what was to come.

Crispy, with a touch of garlic and paprika, it was the first time anywhere I had seen them as an option, though owner Maj Miah informs us the traditional variety remain the most popular. Of the accompanying dips, the sweet pickle option, with its ingredients including tamarind, mango chutney and coriander is to die for.

Maj has built up a successful enterprise at the Garam Masala, the former Central pub, in Old Fallow Road. Having cut his teeth at the existing Dilraj, in Wednesfield,

## MARK SHIPP tucks in

Maj was looking for bigger premises to expand his empire.

He hasn't looked back as next year marks the 10th anniversary since being opened by Wolves legend Steve Bull. Maj is rightly proud of its success, particularly as competition is strong with a plethora of Indian restaurants just up the road.

"We were looking to offer something different to what was already out there and this was the ideal place for us to do that," said Maj, whose kitchen staff have remained in situ since the restaurant's opening.

The Garam Masala has 126 covers with a function room upstairs, ideal for party bookings, which are popular, or for family dining which it prides itself on. Its choice of up-to-date tunes give it that modern, trendy feel and enables us 40-somethings to stay

in the loop. It has a Five-Star RateMyPlate classification and is clean and fresh inside, while subtle changes are often made to the decor and the menu, but not at the expense of alienating customers. The fact it doubles up by serving Cantonese food is a bonus.

## Fusion

Even better for my family and I, it's just a steady stroll away, although customers are said to frequent from Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley and even Stafford. The fare is healthy and there are vegetarian options to go with the traditional offerings, chef's specials and fusion dishes.

Among the most popular dishes, Maj informs me, are sylhet balti and the clay pot chicken. There is a clear interaction between staff and customers and the waiters are on hand for advice, particularly in my case as I looked to feast on fish. I was

told my choice of rupchanda pomfret was dry and came on the bone, so a mass platter was suggested instead.

I skipped the prawns, but the meaty salmon and monkfish, cooked in herbs and spices with a hint of garlic, was delicious.

Guest number one opted for the murg makhani, with mushroom pilau – well received – while the younger guest chose his favourite, chicken tikka masala. Desserts followed, and there was a quirky selection, including a Bollywood kulfi, served in a pot which resembles a film reel Oscar statue base and a Turkish Delight-style cheese-cake. We opted though, for a strawberry and vanilla sundae.

Garam Masala is open every day from 5.30pm. Bookings are now being taken for its three-course Christmas Day menu, Indian or English option, at £24.95 for adults and £12.95 for children. Call 01543 502006.



The lamb shank is cooked in a medium sauce

Express & Star

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# Bungalow on corner plot has generous-sized accommodation

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The Drive in Halesowen, is a generously proportioned detached bungalow situated on a large corner plot approximately quarter of acre with gated driveway.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £325,000.

Conveniently located, close to Halesowen town centre and transport links, the accommodation briefly comprises of a fully fitted kitchen, a large utility, a guest WC, two reception rooms, three spacious bedrooms, a bathroom and gas central heating, double glazing where specified. The lower floor has a large garage and two work shops and there are large gardens, a driveway and garage.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667.



## Spacious end terrace has three double bedrooms

This spacious end of terrace home in Corporation Street, Wednesbury comes with three double bedrooms.

It is for sale through Goodchilds at £135,000.

It has an entrance hallway, a downstairs wet room, a kitchen, a dining room, a living room, a three double bedrooms and a family bathroom.

WEDNESBURY

£135,000

The property benefits double glazing and gas central heating.

In more detail the downstairs wet room has tiled walls, a shower, hand basin and low flush WC.

The kitchen has wall and base units, roll edge working surface and tiled splash-back areas.

also has a bay window. Upstairs the bathroom has tiled walls, a hand basin, low flush WC and a bath with a shower.

For further information contact Goodchilds on 0844 800 9404 or visit [www.goodchilds-uk.com](http://www.goodchilds-uk.com)

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**HALESOWEN, Springfield Road£1,450 pcm+Fees**  
A unique extended detached residence in this very convenient location. This lovely property has 3 reception rooms, large kitchen/dining area with breakfast bar, downstairs w.c., 5 double bedrooms (2 with French doors leading to balcony overlooking garden, beautiful bathroom with separate shower, large rear garden, driveway and double garage. Also features: CCTV, full disk-up alarm system, bathroom with sauna/steam room & Jacuzzi bath. EPC: TBC



**HALESOWEN, Whittingham Road£850 pcm+Fees**  
Large 3 bedroom semi-detached house with a perfect location for Earls & Windsor High School & Halesowen College. Entrance hallway, 26ft lounge with feature fireplace, further study/bedroom 4, downstairs w.c., 3 good sized bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, lovely rear garden with shed & summer house, garage & driveway parking for several cars. EPC: TBC



**HALESOWEN, Huntlands Road£800 pcm+Fees**  
Beautiful views overlooking Cliff! This lovely 3 bedroom semi-detached property located in this very popular location close to schools & bus routes. Featuring Large reception room, refurbished modern kitchen/dining area, downstairs cloakroom, 3 good size bedrooms (2 with wardrobes) refurbished modern bathroom with separate corner shower cubicle, mature private rear garden, garage & driveway parking, new gas central heating, double glazed and alarmed. EPC: E



**HALESOWEN, Sunbury Road£795 pcm+Fees**  
A superbly presented modern detached family home in central Halesowen, perfect for Windsor & Earls High School & Halesowen College. Featuring a spacious lounge/dining area, conservatory, fitted kitchen, downstairs cloakroom, 3 good size bedrooms & family bathroom on the 1st floor. The property has a driveway for 2 cars & garage, gas central heating, double glazing and a lovely garden to the rear overlooking Windsor High School playing fields. EPC: TBC



**BRIERLEY HILL, Walker Avenue£675 pcm+Fees**  
UNDERGOING A REFURBISHMENT! A modern semi-detached house offering spacious family, accommodation comprising of: entrance hallway, large lounge, fitted kitchen, 3 good sized bedrooms, new bathroom with shower, driveway parking & garage. EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, Beecher Street£675 pcm+Fees**  
A deceptively large unfurnished bungalow which has just been refurbished. Ideal for buses to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Birmingham and in the catchment area for Colley Lane Primary School. Featuring 3 bedrooms, a large lounge, modern fitted kitchen, new bathroom with shower. Benefits include central heating, double glazing, driveway parking. EPC: D



**HALESOWEN, Rossendale Close£650 pcm+Fees**  
A lovely 2 bedroom semi detached bungalow in a quiet cul-de-sac, newly decorated & carpeted. Also ideal for the number 9 bus in to Stourbridge, Halesowen and Birmingham. Featuring modern fitted kitchen with oven/hob, large lounge, conservatory, 2 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower, driveway & private rear garden. EPC: TBC



**WORDSLEY, Ryder Street £650 pcm+Fees**  
Semi-detached and spacious 2 bedroom traditional house in this very popular location close to all transport links and King George V park. Featuring entrance hallway, lounge, kitchen with appliances/dining area, conservatory, rear garden, 2 good size bedrooms, family bathroom, driveway for 3 cars. EPC: TBC



**BARTLEY GREEN, Woodgate Gardens£625 pcm+Fees**  
Improved & deceptively large end terraced house, newly carpeted with entrance porch, hallway, large lounge, downstairs WC, kitchen/dining area with patio doors leading to garden, 3 good size bedrooms, shower room, off road parking. EPC: D



**HAGLEY, Newlands Close £595 pcm+Fees**  
A superb modern ground floor apartment located near to Hagley Village & situated close to motorway links, open plan lounge/ kitchen with appliances, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes and en-suite shower room & 1 large single bedroom, white bathroom suite, allocated parking, secure entry system. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



**CRADLEY HEATH, Clifton Street£550 pcm+Fees**  
Within walking distance to Old Hill shops and local train station. A well presented unfurnished modern mid terrace house benefits from gas central heating, lovely living room, fitted dining kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, 2 allocated parking spaces. EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, The Forge £525 pcm+Fees**  
Part furnished or Unfurnished. A modern 2 bedroom semi detached property situated in a quiet cul de sac and within walking distance to Cradley Heath Train Station, bus links and shops. Featuring a great living room with sofas, kitchen with white goods, 2 bedrooms (1 with a bed), bathroom with shower, private rear garden, driveway, gas central heating. EPC: C



**AMBLECOTE, Villa Street £500 pcm+Fees**  
A beautiful ground floor modern apartment which can either be furnished or unfurnished. Newly available with open plan lounge/kitchen with modern range of fitted units, breakfast bar & integrated appliances, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with separate shower, 1 designated car parking space to rear of property, communal gardens. EPC: D



**HALESOWEN, Whitehall Court£495 pcm+Fees**  
Centrally located to Halesowen Town Centre is this well presented 1st floor flat with private entrance, hallway, kitchen with appliances, living room, bathroom with newly fitted shower, 2 good size bedrooms, communal garden & secure parking to rear of property. EPC: C



**HALESOWEN, Richmond Court£450 pcm+Fees**  
A unfurnished 1 bed 1st floor apartment close to Halesowen Town Centre and bus links. Featuring kitchen with integrated appliances, living room, lovely modern shower room, electric storage heating and on road parking. This property is close to Huntingtree Park and a few minutes drive to Halesowen Town. EPC: D



**BRIERLEY HILL, Norwood Road£425 pcm+Fees**  
An unfurnished end terraced house, close to local shops and not far from Merry Hill Shopping Centre. This large house features a lovely living room, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden, on road parking. EPC: E



**STOURBRIDGE, Stamberrill House£425 pcm+Fees**  
COMING SOON!! Fully refurbished apartments within a stones throw of Stourbridge Town Centre and on the number 9 bus route. This stunning 1 bedroom apartment on the 1st floor features an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC



**STOURBRIDGE, Stamberrill House£425 pcm+Fees**  
Fully refurbished apartments within a stones throw of Stourbridge Town Centre and on the number 9 bus route. This stunning 1 bedroom apartment on the ground floor features an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC



**DUDLEY, Greystone Passage£395 pcm+Fees**  
1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! A recently redecorated 1st floor flat within walking distance to Dudley Town Centre. Featuring kitchen, 1 bedroom, bathroom with shower, Garden, off road parking. Unfurnished. This property must be seen and not missed. EPC: E



**HALESOWEN, Apperley Way£385 pcm+Fees**  
Quiet location. An opportunity to acquire a spacious first floor apartment. Part furnished to suit tenant, on the ever popular Homer Hill estate, comprises : 1 double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, lounge with dining table and chair/side table/coffee table, fitted kitchen with white goods, modern house bathroom with shower, driveway parking. Ideal for first time renters. Additional fees will apply. EPC: F



**KIDDERMINSTER, Bewdley Road£350 pcm+Fees**  
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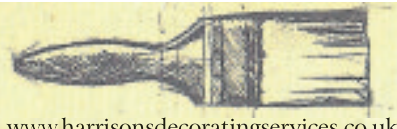
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1

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3

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FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**building services**

**DAVIES & SON BUILDERS**  
Over 35 years experience in the industry  
All aspects of building work including:  
Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.  
Discounts offered.  
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

**building supplies**

**QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING** @ low prices.  
Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

**carpet & upholstery cleaning**

**A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING**  
OAP discount. Recession Prices.  
Unbeatable Value. Rooms cleaned from £10  
Call Paul 07870 341089

**fencing**

**ClassifiedAds**  
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

**PORTWAY FENCING**

**CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...**  
"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"

Michael -  
Portway Fencing.  
FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**PORTWAY FENCING**

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
10 bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards. HEAVY DUTY PANELS SUPPLIED AND FITTED  
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656  
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm  
Sat 8am - 12noon  
83 Portway Rd, W'bury  
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

**house clearances**

**Absolute BEST** cash price paid for house clearances and bereavement. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327

## gas fitting

**READERS ARE ADVISED**  
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered. It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

## painters / decorators

**DECORATOR**  
ALL domestic work undertaken  
Reliable & Affordable  
Special rates for OAPs  
No job too SMALL  
Call  
07957 346 059

**PAINTER & DECORATOR**  
Very professional, all work carried out to the highest standard. Any size job undertake. Ring for a free quotation...

Alan Worrall  
01543 431080  
07952 455840

## removals

**KT REMOVALS**  
12 years experience.  
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.  
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.  
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:  
07771 727119

**A MAN WITH A VAN** Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationalwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

**CALL DEAN NOW:** For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209 / 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

**CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN.** Removals, clearances, large/small. 01902 741546, 07899 635852.

## roofing

**MG ROOFING** Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

**SEMI RETIRED ROOFER**  
Ridge Tiles Redbedded, flat roofing, no job to small  
40 years experience.  
Keith: 07546 158165

## skip hire

**ClassifiedAds**  
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

**GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE**

**CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...**

Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy! It definitely works for us!

**Grinsells Skip Hire.**  
FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**PORTWAY FENCING**

**4**  
Pets & Animals

**equestrian corner**

**ALL READERS** are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

## guns & dogs

**NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS**  
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

## pets corner

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

**CANARIES FOR SALE** cocks and hens.  
07946 625275.

**CAVALIER KING** Charles Spaniel pups, blenheim/tri colour, dogs and bitches. £650 each. 07468 596810.

**JACK RUSSELL** pups, nine weeks old, ready now. Five dogs. Wormed feed. £300 each. 07881 968207.

**KIND HOMES WANTED**  
**ANNIE** - 2 yr old very small Jack Russell, little superstar.

**SALLY** - pretty 2 yr old Border Collie, sweet nature, little shy.

**MOSS** - 8 months old Border Collie, gentle boy

**CHOP** - 3 yr old Staffie, mostly white, good with dogs, mostly white, good with dogs, mostly white, good with dogs.

**BELLA** - golden coloured girl, Lab size, lovely temperament.

Several short haired Tri Collie Crosses 14 months old.  
01588 676106.  
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

**LUCY** Affectionate, 12 year old neutered cat looking for new home, suit retired persons or someone living alone. 07847 360784.

5

**Business & Farming**

**business opportunities**

**READERS** are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

**CLOSING DOWN.** Cards, invitations inc gift paper, plus Christmas cards. Over 2,500 cards. Best offers over £1,000 ono. 07760 445946.

**FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL**  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**BLACK COUNTRY HOMES**

**WE PAY 100% of purchase price** (EVERY TIME!)

**Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE**  
You agree the price, we buy the house.

• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU  
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6**  
or 01384 226086 24/7  
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

**CASH NOW** wolverhampton properties

**FOR YOUR HOUSE**  
• Legal Fees Paid • Guaranteed Offer  
• No Fees • Repossessions Stopped  
• Any Condition • We can buy your house in 2 days

**0800 389 6788**  
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

6  
Property

**CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...**

**properties wanted**

**ClassifiedAds**  
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

**BLACK COUNTRY HOMES**

**CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...**

We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.

Black Country Homes

**FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL**  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**Need to sell your home fast?** Purchase Agreed Within 7 DAYS

**We can help you make a fresh start**

With solutions to suit...  
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start

ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED  
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT  
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS  
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE  
LOCAL COMPANY

**MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS**  
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY  
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?

0121 405 0797 OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

\*Terms and Conditions apply

**Home Cash Buyer**

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish  
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

**Houses / Land Required**

Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154  
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049  
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901  
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

**ClassifiedAds**  
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

**CLASSIFIEDS HELPED ME...**

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"

Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

**FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL**  
01902 319 191  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**BLACK COUNTRY HOMES**

**WE PAY 100% of purchase price** (EVERY TIME!)

**Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE**  
You agree the price, we buy the house.

• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU  
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6**  
or 01384 226086 24/7  
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

**CASH NOW** wolverhampton properties

**FOR YOUR HOUSE**  
• Legal Fees Paid • Guaranteed Offer  
• No Fees • Repossessions Stopped  
• Any Condition • We can buy your house in 2 days

**0800 389 6788**  
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

**BLACK COUNTRY HOMES**

**WE PAY 100% of purchase price** (EVERY TIME!)

**Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE**  
You agree the price, we buy the house.

• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU  
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6**  
or 01384 226086 24/7  
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

**CASH NOW** wolverhampton properties

**FOR YOUR HOUSE**  
• Legal Fees Paid • Guaranteed Offer  
• No Fees • Repossessions Stopped  
• Any Condition • We can buy your house in 2 days

**0800 389 6788**  
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms



## flats for sale

**PENN** Elegant 2-bed retirement flat, lovely views, immaculate, fitted carpets, nearby shops, bus stop, parks. £100,000. 07813 514906.

## mobile homes

## MUST BE SEEN

## OMAR

## FULLY RESIDENTIAL PARKHOME

Double unit, 38x20, 2 bedrooms, private parking, situated in Penkridge. Contact for full details.

07810 044813 or 07801 530894.

## overseas property

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

## 7

## Jobs

## full time - general

**WINDOW FABRICATORS** required, Halesowen area. Immediate Start. Contact in first instance tel: 0121 550 9940

## 8

## Motoring

## cars under £1500

## ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

## MUST BE SEEN

## CITROEN XANTIA 1.9 TD

T reg, silver, 80,000 miles, two owners, all electrics, 11 months MoT, excellent runner, well maintained. £395. 07908 009210.

**FIAT PUNTO 1200**, 16 valve Active Sport, MoT till April 2017, 05 reg, good condition through out, 80,000 miles, black, £695 ono. 07500 753663.

## FOR A QUICK SALE

## FIAT PUNTO ACTIVE

2004, 5Dr, 116,000 miles, silver, long MoT, good runner, clean inside, fsh, good tyres, quick sale

## SOLD

## GOOD RUNNER

## FORD MONDEO

2001. 12 months MoT. One owner. 48,000 miles. £400. 01384 296647.

## BARGAIN

## HYUNDAI GETZ

1.3 GSi 52 plate, 12 months MoT, tinted back windows, colour red. £600 ono. 01902 843730 after 2pm.



## KIA RIO

2004, 1.4, MoT. Excellent condition, electric windows / mirrors, PAS, central locking, CD / MP3 player, excellent heater, 83,000 miles, spacious, reliable, service history. £375 ono. 07486 092718.

## Express &amp; Star

## BE A LOCAL STAR

## Sales Relationship Merchandiser

Do you have an eye for detail, are you self-motivated, enthusiastic and are able to communicate effectively and with confidence.

The Express and Star are looking for a sales relationship merchandiser to join our team helping to grow audience, strengthen the relationship with retailers, readers and ensure the brand experience is positive.

Working within a busy customer focused environment, the successful applicant will work as part of a team, in designated territories, you will be required to ensure that all our titles are available, in key strategic positions to maximise response and exposure.

Previous sales or merchandising experience in the FMCG market is desirable, but not essential. The ability to react quickly and positively to a wide variety of situations is required. A professional attitude must be displayed at all times. You must have a full current driving licence, transport will be provided.

In return we offer full training and support, an annual salary of £8,360, 25 days holiday per year and enrolment into the company pension scheme.

The position is 20 hours per week worked across 5 days between Monday-Saturday, weekends and Bank Holiday working will be required on a rota basis.

If you would like to be considered for this role please send your cv and covering letter to: HR Department Midland News Association, Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES or by e-mail to: hr@mnamedia.co.uk

MONDAY  
TUESDAY  
WEDNESDAY  
JOBSDAY

jobs.expressandstar.com  
REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

## BARGAIN

## MERCEDES C180SE CLASSIC

2003 (03), 89,000 miles. Automatic, silver, MoT, FSH. One owner from new. £950 ono. Contact 01384 422042

## BARGAIN

## PEUGEOT 206 1600

02, many new parts, soft top, MoT 2017, good condition. £1,000 ono. 07475 569077.



## RENAULT CLIO DIESEL

56 reg, £30 tax, 100k, cambelt changed, abs, air con, fsh, long MoT, c/l, electric windows, pas, very good condition. £1,399. 07879 403302.



## RENAULT MEGANE CONVERTIBLE

2006, 1.6 petrol, grey, immaculate condition, lady owner, first to see will buy, MoT, air con, fsh, abs, CD, 93,000 miles. £1,475. 07957 480534.

## FOR A QUICK SALE

## RENAULT MODUS

2005, 1.5 diesel, 99,000 miles, blue, good condition, runs well, 5 months MoT. £850 ono. 01562 515658.

## GOOD RUNNER

## ROVER 25

04 reg, red, economical. 12 months MoT, sunroof, CD, new clutch. Very good condition. £650 ono. Telephone 07503 748161.



## ROVER 45

2001, metallic blue, great condition, 60,000 miles, 7 months MoT, good runner. £450 ono. 07746 798495.



## VAUXHALL ZAFIRA

2004, 1.8L petrol, 112,000 miles, MoT till June 2017, fold away rear seats, very spacious, alloys, remote central locking, all electric, sunroof, CD player. £850 ono. 07870 884108.

## cars over £1500



## AUDI A3 DIESEL

1.9 Tdi Sport, 3 dr, 2008, 55,000 Miles, Black, FSH, (half Audi, half other), MoT, 2 owners, recent cam belt, water pump and battery. Low Miles for year

£4,999



## BMW Z4 ROADSTER

Low mileage (69,200). 3.0 petrol, 2004, metallic grey, MoT, fsh, lady owner last 8 years plus, excellent condition, black leather interior, powered seats, alarm, central locking, radio/CD. £5,625 ono. Telephone 01384 832293 or 07811 111583.



## CITROEN DISPATCH HDI

59 plate, silver, 32,305 miles, 10 months MoT, 9 seater, very good condition. £8,250 plus vat 01588 650646.

## MUST BE SEEN

## FORD FIESTA 1.25

64 plate, 12,600 miles, blue, 3-dr, FSH, one previous owner. £5,500 ono. 07867 601027

## MUST BE SEEN

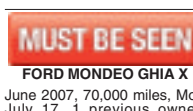
## FORD FOCUS

TITANIUM TDI 1.6 6 speed, 5dr, 2012 12, 2 owners, FSH, 89,000 miles, 60mpg plus, £20 tax, silver, all extras, full MoT. Superb value. £5,495. 07546 779139.



## FORD KUGA 2012 2.0 TDCI

TITANIUM 4X4 AUTO. Excellent Condition. MOT. FSH. Diesel. 5dr. 31,000 miles. Parking sensors. Alloys. Cruise Control. A/C. Part Leather interior. £12,950. 01691 791544 / 07980 850051.



## FORD MONDEO GHIA X

June 2007, 70,000 miles, MoT July 17, 1 previous owner, service history, full leather seats, heated front seats, heated front screen, very good condition. £2,150. 01384 573529 or 07925 919777.

## MUST BE SEEN

## FORD MONDEO GHIA X

June 2007, 70,000 miles, MoT July 17, 1 previous owner, service history, full leather seats, heated front seats, heated front screen, very good condition. £2,150. 01384 573529 or 07925 919777.



## MERCEDES 230CE

1983, 84,000 miles, campagne, abs, air bag, fsh, long MoT, metallic paint, central locking, pas.

£11,995 ono.

01384 231705.

## PRESTIGE

## MERCEDES SL350

## AUTOMATIC CONVERTIBLE

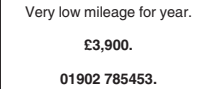
54 reg, 72,000 miles, FSH, Obsidian Black, with cream leather, keyless go, power hood, panoramic glass roof, anti roll bar wind deflector, alloys, sat nav, Xenon lights, 2 keys. Absolutely pristine. £9,999. 07836 204455 or 07545 601552.

## 1ST TO SEE WILL BUY

## MITSUBISHI L200 4 LIFE

## DOUBLE CAB DIESEL

03 plate. Very low mileage for year. £3,900. 01902 785453.



## NISSAN NAVARA

04 plate, only 8,000 miles since complete engine rebuild, LED light bar and spots, armadillo rear locker, side ported chrome exhaust, roll and bull bars, full leather, new stereo and sub woofer. £3,800. 07967 412084.

## NISSAN NOTE

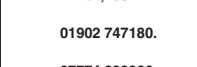
1.6 ACENTA 5 door, lady driver. Economical, reliable, 100,000 miles. £1,495. 01902 747180. 07774 898966.



## NISSAN QASHQAI 2.0

## TECKNA

5dr, orange, 57 reg, 79,130 miles, black leather, panoramic glass roof, FSH, serviced Oct 10, 2016, MoT Mar 2017, lady owner, 2 owners, ill health forces sale. £4,700 ono. 01902 830504 / 07768 183990.



## PEUGEOT 107

2013, 51,000 miles, white, abs, air bag, fsh, MoT until March 2017, pas, stereo, CD, LEDs on bumper, spare wheel, black wheels, good tyres. £3,995 ono. 07900 811006.



## PEUGEOT 107

2013, 51,000 miles, white, abs, air bag, fsh, MoT until March 2017, pas, stereo, CD, LEDs on bumper, spare wheel, black wheels, good tyres. £3,995 ono. 07900 811006.

## EXCELLENT CONDITION

## PEUGEOT 206

HDI 1.4 DIESEL 2004. 5 door. E/W. PAS. A/C. CD player, 89,000 miles. £30 year road tax. 12 months MoT. £850. 07817 073369.



## SKODA SUPERB

## ELEGANCE

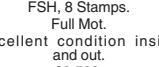
2009, 1 owner, 65,000 miles, green, auto, diesel, just serviced, fsh, MoT to November 29, 2017. Top spec. £7,000 ono. 01902 710070.

## EXCELLENT CONDITION

## VAUXHALL VECTRA

## EXCLUSIVE 1800

5 door. 56 reg. 43,000 miles. FSH, 8 Stamps. Full MoT. Excellent condition inside and out. £2,500. 01902 656292.



## VAUXHALL VECTRA

## EXCLUSIVE 1800

5 door. 56 reg. 43,000 miles. FSH, 8 Stamps. Full MoT. Excellent condition inside and out. £2,500. 01902 656292.

## classic cars

## CLASSIC CAR

## MGB ROADSTAR

N reg 1975, black, hard top, engine, gear box, overdrive, restoration project. Bargain £1,000

## Bargain £1,000

01902 291956 or 07896 482219 (private sale).

## WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private

cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

## commercial vehicles

## PEUGEOT PARTNER VAN

P600, 2005, 1.9D, white, ply wood / lined, air con, new front discs and pads, FSH. 90,000 miles. £1,695. ono. 01384 865865.

## driving tuition

## Homer's

10 Hours £125! Four Hours £40! 2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered AD/DPD REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10. 07432 458100 / 01962 870050. 01384 234864 / 0121 5640090. 01902 580065 www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

## scrap vehicles

## OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded

that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

## MCE

## TOP PRICES PAID FOR

ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS Tel: 01902 408176 1000's of parts available at all times MONMORE RD, WV1 2TZ

## ABC AUTO SALVAGE

## WANTED URGENT

Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available 0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

## alan reed cars

Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call. 01562 711083 / 07831 245313

## CROWN MOTORS guarantee best

price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

## 9

## Local Information

## public &amp; legal notices

## LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

## 10

## Personals

## personal

## Angels

The largest adult operators in the Midlands

Adults Only - Naughty Lingerie - Cocking New Toys - Under 5 Frederick - Best - Models - WGS - 01922 835544

## AT MANYANA Gentlemen's Club

5\* customer rated Mon-Fri 10-9pm. Sat-Sun: 10-11pm. 0121 472 7281.

## ATTRACTION, lonely Female

seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489121.

## FEMALE SEEKING

## RESPECTABLE GENTLEMAN

Who enjoys the good things in life, 55 and over. Must be solvent. I enjoy meals in and out, holidays and have a good sense of humour

Box Number P20615, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

## LADY, EARLY 60'S

Wishes to meet male Friend / Companion must be solvent, age between 55 - 68, for holidays, outings and meals, hopefully leading to a long term friendship.

Box Number P20615, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

## SANTA SLEIGH OWNER

## AND REINDEER STABLE

Mid 60's, tall, average build, loyal and honest, likes most things in life, GSOH, WLTM slim to average Mrs Claus to fill my Christmas stocking and put the icing on my cake, Ho Ho Ho.

Box Number P20615, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

## general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

MORE CATEGORIES  
MORE CLASSIFICATIONS  
MORE CHOICE

01902 317878

## ClassifiedAds





# Halesowen Autos

Quality Used Cars At Great Prices

 <b>09/09 Range Rover Sport 2.7 TDV6 Diesel SE</b> 5dr Automatic, 74k, Green, Alloys, Black leather, Sat-Nav, Climate Control, CD, E/Windows <b>£15995 / POA</b>	 <b>12/12 Mini Cooper Coupe</b> 3dr, ONLY 26k miles, Blue Metallic, Alloys, Cream Leather, Air Con, E/Windows, CD Player <b>£8495 / £47 Per Week</b>
 <b>09/59 Jaguar XF 3.0D V6 Luxury Diesel</b> 4dr Automatic, ONLY 35k miles, ONE Owner, Ultimate Black, Alloys, Black Leather, Sat-Nav, Climate Control, CD, E/Windows <b>£13995 / POA</b>	 <b>09/09 Audi A4 2.0 TDI Diesel 143 SE</b> 5dr Multitronic Auto Estate, 88k, Black, Alloys, Digital Air Con, CD, E/Windows <b>£8495 / £47 Per Week</b>
 <b>10/10 Mercedes C220 CDI Diesel Blue EFFICIENCY Elegance</b> 4dr Automatic, ONLY 36k miles, Grey Metallic, Alloys, Black Leather, Heated Seats, Climate Control, CD, E/Windows <b>£11495 / POA</b>	 <b>08/08 Mercedes C Class C180K 1.8 Elegance</b> 5dr Automatic Estate, 80k, Silver, Alloys, Black Leather, Heated Seats, CD, Climate Control, E/Windows <b>£7495 / £38 Per Week</b>
 <b>07/07 BMW Z4 3.0 Si Sport 2dr Coupe</b> 64k, Blue Metallic, Alloys, Air Con, E/Seats, E/Windows, CD, Park Sensors <b>£10995 / £58 Per Week</b>	 <b>08/08 Honda Civic Type-R 2.0 i-VTEC</b> 3dr, 51k, Bronze Metallic, Purple Metallic Alloys, Push Button Start, CD Player, Electric Windows <b>£6495 / £33 Per Week</b>
 <b>11/60 BMW 1 Series 118d M Sport</b> 2dr Diesel Convertible, 73k, White, Alloys, Half Leather, Air Con, E/Seats, E/Windows, CD, Parking Sensors <b>£10495 / £55 Per Week</b>	 <b>09/09 Ford Fiesta 1.25 Zetec</b> 3dr, ONLY 26k MILES, Red, Alloys, Air Con, CD Player, Electric Windows <b>£5795 / £30 Per Week</b>
 <b>10/10 Ford S-Max 2.0 TDCi 140 Zetec Diesel</b> 5dr Powershift Automatic 7 Seater, 41k, Grey Metallic, One Owner plus Supplying Dealer, Alloys, Air Con, CD, E/Windows, Parking Sensors <b>£10495 / £55 Per Week</b>	 <b>10/10 Skoda Fabia 1.9 TDi Sport</b> 60k, Mauve with White Roof, Alloys, Air Con, CD, E/Windows <b>£4995 / £28 Per Week</b>
 <b>08/57 Audi TT 2.0T FSI 2dr S Tronic</b> Convertible Automatic, 55k, Red Metallic, Alloys, Grey Leather, CD, E/Seats, E/Windows <b>£9995 / £53 Per Week</b>	 <b>07/07 Honda Civic 1.8 i-VTEC ES</b> 5dr with Panoramic Roof, ONLY 47k miles, Blue, Alloys, Push Button Start, Air Con, CD, Dual Climate Control, E/Windows <b>£4995 / £28 Per Week</b>
 <b>12/62 Vauxhall Antara 2.2 CDTi Exclusiv 4x4</b> Automatic, 47k, White, Alloys, Half Leather, Heated Seats, Air Con, CD, E/Windows <b>£9995 / £53 Per Week</b>	 <b>08/58 Toyota Auris 1.6 VVTi SR</b> 5dr, 75k, Blue Metallic, Alloys, Air Con, CD Player, E/Windows <b>£3695 / £20 Per Week</b>
 <b>07/57 Mercedes SLK 200K 1.8</b> 2dr Tip Hard-top Convertible Automatic, 56k, Blue, Alloys, Cream Leather, Heated seats, CD, E/Seats <b>£9695 / £50 Per Week</b>	 <b>08/58 Fiat Bravo 1.9 Multijet Diesel Dynamic</b> 5dr, 61k, Blue, Alloys, CD, Air-Con, E/Windows <b>£3495 / £18 Per Week</b>

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## MOTURING

# Danger to babies in car seats but don't stop using them!

Newborn babies could be at risk of suffocation if they spend more than 30 minutes in a car seat, research has suggested.

A recent study conducted by researchers from Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Swindon, the University of Southampton and the University of Bristol found that putting babies in an upright position could lead to breathing difficulties.

A vehicle simulator was used to replicate the effects of placing a newborn baby in a car seat at the 40-degree angle required for travelling.

Of the 40 newborn babies used in the study, researchers observed that a number of them experienced a dangerous drop in their blood oxygen levels, with some falling below 85 per cent saturation. This is far lower than the normal level in the high 90s.

The authors of the study, which was led by Dr Renu Arya, a consultant paediatrician at Great Western Hospital, commented: "A motion simulator was developed to reproduce vertical vibration broadly representative of that at the base of a car safety seat fixed in a rear-facing position in the back seat of a small family car.

"The simulator reproduced the vertical vibrations from travelling at 30mph on a straight urban road, excluding braking, acceleration or going over bumps."



Take care with babies in car seats

It was found that after 30 minutes, the babies' heart and breathing rates had increased, while blood oxygen levels were lower than those associated with lying flat in a cot. This change was observed under conditions where the vehicle was in motion, as well as stationary.

Although the researchers were able to show potential changes in cardiorespiratory stability among the infants when they were placed in this more upright position, it is as yet unknown if this put the infants at serious risk of suffocation.

The researchers commented: "We cannot be certain of the clinical significance or potential risks posed by the changes we have identified."

While further studies are required to properly identify any potential risks associated with transporting newborn babies in car seats, Dr Arya has urged parents to continue to use car seats. "Parents should not stop using car safety seats to transport their infants. Infants must be protected in moving vehicles, and UK law requires car seats be used whenever infants travel in cars."



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# New connectivity offering launched with the Kodiah



Kodiah drivers are fully connected

Alongside the launch of the Škoda Kodiah, the brand is also presenting its new connectivity offering – mobile online services – under the label Škoda Connect.

These are divided into two categories. The Infotainment Online services provide information and aid navigation, while the Care Connect services provide assistance as well as remote access to the car.

"From now on, Škoda Kodiah drivers are fully connected – to their car and, if desired, to the world of Škoda," explained Werner Eichhorn, Škoda Board member for sales and marketing. "With Škoda Connect we are making a digital world accessible to our customers that will make their driving experience even more comfortable and safe."

The Infotainment Online services are available in every Kodiah that is equipped with the Amundsen or Columbus navigation systems. One standout feature here is the online traffic information: this displays the current traffic flow on the selected route and suggests sensible alternative routes in the event of a traffic jam. With Google Earth™ and Google StreetView™, navigation using the Columbus navigation system becomes a visual experience. Additionally, the services provide information for drivers of the new SUV in fuel prices, parking information, news and weather.

Besides the Infotainment Online services, the Care Connect services, which can be divided into Proactive Services and Remote Vehicle Access, will also be available from now on. These come as standard on every Škoda Kodiah in the UK – irrespective of the choice of infotainment system. The data is exchanged via the car's own integrated SIM card.

## Important

The Emergency Call function is particularly important here. This is automatically activated after an accident in which a restraint system, such as an airbag, has been deployed. The vehicle establishes a voice and data connection to a dedicated emergency call centre and transfers all of the necessary information. An employee at the emergency call centre initiates the most appropriate support measures and, where necessary, sends an emergency vehicle to the site of the accident. The driver or passengers can also trigger the Emergency Call manually via a button in the roof module. Service Scheduling is also included in the Proactive Services. Here the owner is contacted by the retailer before the vehicle's service is due in order to arrange a convenient and timely appointment.

The Škoda Care Connect services also include the services for Remote Vehicle Access, which can be accessed via the Škoda Connect app, i.e. via the user's smartphone. Here the Vehicle Status service remotely informs the user about the status of the lights and fuel tank of the Škoda Kodiah as well as whether the doors are open or closed. The Parking position function shows where the vehicle is parked. The Honk & Flash function makes it easier to find the car by activating the horn and indicator, as the name suggests.

The Škoda Connect app is complemented by the Škoda Connect portal, which brings the Connect services to the customer's home computer. The portal can be used to configure services as well as transfer destinations and routes to the car. The Škoda dealer will help with registration and activation in the portal.

The Care Connect services from Škoda Connect can be accessed free of charge for the first year following the purchase of a new Škoda Kodiah. Subsequently the services of Remote Vehicle Access are subject to a charge, while all other Care Connect services can be used free of charge for a further 13 years.

The offer for the Infotainment Online portfolio has a similar arrangement. Use is free of charge for the first year and the customer can extend this for a fee. With the Amundsen navigation system, the services operate through the user's connected mobile phone or via a data dongle that is available as an optional extra. With the Columbus system, the mobile phone's hotspot can also be used or a SIM card can be integrated.



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Seeking to send fossil fuels back to the Ice Age

# Boldly going forward (ish)

By Paul Naylor

My first experience behind the wheel of a revolutionary electric vehicle happened more than two years ago. I took delivery of a Nissan Leaf and at the time I wrote how much I enjoyed the concept. The lack of noise was noticeable, amusing my children as we traversed the highways, windows down to fully appreciate it quietness.

Then there was the novelty of no fuel. Plugging the car in every couple of days to charge the petrol-free beast was more akin to mobile phone ownership than motoring. Much like its portable telecommunication cousins, focus on battery-life life becomes – excuse the pun – all-consuming.

In my original review I praised the ideals of Nissan for even contemplating an all-electric vehicle. Indeed, the Leaf is not the first purely electric car, but certainly recognised as the pivotal family-run about aimed at greener-minded drivers, seeking to send fossil fuels back to the Ice Age.

Fast forward 24+ months and a shiny, updated version of the Leaf arrived at the office. Unlike the majority of review vehicles – if not all other – the Leaf arrived on the back of a flat-bed truck, hinting at its limitations regarding 'driving range'.

This incarnation – the Tekna 30kWh – looks very similar to its forerunner, with the most notable addition being the LED lighting. Billed as bronze in colour, most folk would label it as metallic brown, but hey, colour choice is always a personal thing. Let's not dwell on that preference.

So, what is it like to drive? Well, for the first 30 minutes it wasn't. Not Nissan's fault, more mine really.

Unlike the previous model I had tested, this Leaf came with an additional – and extremely well-concealed – safety measure.

## Confused

I sat at the 'helm' of the car, glowing dashboard displaying an estimated range of 128 miles. Great.

I put the Leaf's automatic gear shift into drive and depressed the accelerator and ... nothing.

The flap that acts as a hand-break was definitely off. Check. Quiet engine on. Check.

It felt like it wanted to go. And yet ...

Thirty minutes later, and feeling somewhat confused/flustered I sheepishly crept from the driving seat back in to the office.

I googled "getting the Nissan Leaf to go" and "my Leaf won't move" feverishly. Help me. HELP ME.

Five minutes later I found the solution.

For those of you who have seen JJ Abrams' rebooted Star Trek from a few years back, the initial launch of the Enterprise is thwarted when Sulu hasn't taken off an additional parking break.

It transpires that a foot break, hidden flush to the floor, needs to be depressed before 'take off'.

I was relieved to finally be on the road again. The shenanigans had made a dent in my projected driving range, but the experience of gliding around in the Leaf was as I had remembered. Quiet and comfortable, it is a joy to drive. The gearbox is excellent. So responsive and acceleration is a dream.

I remain a fan of the Nissan Leaf. The concept is strong and while the driving range has increased a tad, for many motorists the charging of a vehicle and the time it takes is still an inconvenience in such a busy world.

Nissan is getting there, but unless you – the driver – are all about pottering about, it will be a few years yet before such vehicles become truly practical.

## AT A GLANCE

Nissan Leaf Tekna 30kWh

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Electric Motor type AC synchronous

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Max torque 1 (Nm/min-1) 254/0-3008rpm

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Bull in familiar pose – he scored 306 goals in old gold and black



How The Express & Star reported the signings – and the end of Bull's career



Bully went on to win 13 England caps and played at Italia 90



Steve Bull and Andy Thompson on joining Wolves 30 years ago

# No Bull – signing broke the Black Country divide

**THE Black Country divide was crossed in a bright orange Ford Cortina the day Steve Bull's legend was born at Wolves 30 years ago.**

A Thursday that began at West Bromwich Albion and finished at Molineux occurred on 20 November 1986.

Andy Thompson also made the trip to talk to Wolves about a £70,000 double deal.

Both were contenders for the first-team at Albion, who had just been relegated to Division Two.

Wolves, however, were beginning the first of their two seasons in the bottom tier. Graham Turner's arrival as boss had steadied the ship, while Baggies counterpart Ron Saunders was busy clearing out much of the squad at the Hawthorns.

'Bully' had been plucked from West Midlands League outfit Tipton Town in 1984, whose manager Sid Day also worked as a scout for Albion.

## Waited

He had made his first-team debut under Nobby Stiles on 23 October 1985, replacing Garth Crooks as a substitute in a 2-1 Full Members Cup win against Crystal Palace. He waited a further five months for his league debut, a 1-0 defeat at Queens Park Rangers on 12 April 1986. His full bow came at home to Sheffield Wednesday 10 days later.

That would turn out to be his only football in the top-flight, with three more Second Division appearances and two League Cup appearances the next season before he was sold.

Bull used his first wife Sarah's old car to drive himself and Thommo to put pen to paper at Molineux. Over the next 13 years Bully surpassed John Richards' goalscoring record with 306 in 561 games.

The former John Ireland at the ground has been re-

## SPORTING MEMORIES

By Craig Birch

**"We were just Black Country lads who wanted to play first-team football and he guaranteed us that."**

named after him and he's an honorary club president. He was made an MBE in 2000 and won 13 England caps, going to the 1990 World Cup.

He debuted at home to Wrexham two days after joining, a 3-0 defeat, and played in the FA Cup humbling against Chorley before a lifeless loss at Lincoln.

He said: "I was 21, at the time, and very immature. I didn't really know that much about football and I'd only been a professional for about 18 months.

"Sid Day was a scout for Johnny Giles and Nobby Stiles and my manager at Tipton Town. He got me the chance with Albion. I was doing 13 hours a day in a factory and then training Tuesday and Thursday night with the youth-team at Albion. I left my job to go and play football.

"I only did that when I got my deal and I knew I had to make the most of it. I rolled my socks up and hard work, sometimes, pays off. When they decided to sell me, I'd just scored three goals in five games but there was also Garth Crooks, Imre Varadi and George Reilly up front. I just don't know why I didn't fit into Ron Saunders' plans."

He added: "Molineux was not the best then, sometimes when I'm there now I just stop to look at the

place and think 'what a transformation.' We came through reception and to the manager's office, where Graham (Turner) came out and wanted to see us separately. I went in, then Thommo.

"He told me that day what the club would be like in 30 years time and he was absolutely bang on.

"We were just Black Country lads who wanted to play first-team football and he guaranteed us that. It was a run-down club offering a like-for-like deal, but Albion didn't want to give us a chance and Wolves opened doors for us."

Thompson will always be associated due to his part in the transfer that took them both away from Albion. He was valued at £20,000 with Bull costing £50,000 at a time when Wolves had escaped financial ruin just a few months earlier.

## Scouted

Featherstone-born Thompson netted 45 goals in 451 games over 11 years. It was a wrench for him to leave Albion, initially, having come through the youth ranks and he didn't think he was given the send-off he deserved.

Thommo said: "I was 13 when I went to West Brom. I got scouted playing for a kids' team in Bloxwich.

"I was in the team at the time that I left. That was the thing that I couldn't understand. It turned out to be the wrong decision for the club.

"We'd come from West Brom, which was a nice ground at the time, but there was just something about Wolves. Graham sold the club to me.

"He was building a young team and he thought he could do great things."

Bull and Thompson were not the last to leave Albion for Wolves that season, with winger Robbie Denison jumping ship for £20,000 on transfer deadline day in March 1987. Now 53 and living in Halesowen, he spent 10 years at the club, playing 353 times, scoring 49 goals.



The former John Ireland Stand at Molineux, now named after Steve Bull



Bull and Thompson reunited at a Wolverhampton pub last month



Steve Bull is presented with his MBE by Her Majesty the Queen





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## Luke who's at double for Glassboys

Stourbridge 3 Buxton 2

TOP scorer and FA Cup hero Luke Benbow scored two outstanding goals as Stourbridge beat Buxton 3-2 on Saturday.

Benbow scored a brilliant free-kick from just outside the box against Whitehawk in the week and did the same again to give the Glassboys the lead after 13 minutes.

There was a 20 minute break shortly after when referee Matthew Law pulled up with what turned out to be a ligament tear and a replacement official to run the line had to be found.

Stourbridge continued to make the running after the delay and Chris Lait played a great pass on the stroke of half time to put Jordan Archer through but his shot was saved by former Wolves goalkeeper Jan Budtz.

When Benbow's second came on 49 minutes it was a contender for goal of the season as he lobbed Budtz from 30 yards, the ball just falling under the bar and into the net.

Buxton were offering little in attack at this stage, though Bradley Grayson did see a shot acrobatically saved by Matt Gould on 62 minutes.

But Stourbridge substitute Jake Heath set Kayleden Brown up for the third goal with his first touch on 72 minutes.

Bradley Grayson reduced the deficit on 83 minutes as he put the ball past Gould from the edge of the area after being set up by Nicky Walker and then got a second on 90 when a low corner found him on the edge of the six-yard box.

And Buxton very nearly snatched an unlikely point when captain Greg Young headed a free kick into the box against the bar and it was then headed just over.

The Glassboys' home clash with Ilkeston on Monday night was postponed.

## Yozza misses out after epic Grand Slam fightback

ANOTHER fantastic comeback from Tipton's Jamie Hughes went awry on missed doubles at the last as he went out of the Grand Slam of Darts at the second round stage.

Hughes had Wolverhampton Civic Hall rocking as he came from 9-5 down to level the scores before a last leg shoot-out. He missed five match darts, including a no score visit during a last-gasp attempt at 24, allowing Chris Doherty back in to settle matters with his first attempt at the same number.

The Black Country thrower played his part in a thriller at the Civic with four 180s and two 177s, the latter against the darts on the way.

Doherty hit five maximums. Hughes had the throw for the 19th and final leg, a 140 leaving him 24 with Doherty not on a finish. He ended up bust.

His second visit saw him miss the board completely with all three goes at double 12, with Doherty pouncing on 24 with his first attempt.

Michael van Gerwen won the Grand Slam for the second time beating James Wade in the final.

## Harvey belts up for martial arts success



Harvey Hawkes

WITH more than 10 years of experience and a growing list of accolades to his name, Harvey Hawkes is a karate prodigy – and he's still only 13.

A second dan black belt in the martial art, the Brierley Hill youngster trains up to five times a week at Dudley Shukokai Karate Club.

Hawkes as had an exceptional year and came away from the recent Carlow International Karate Championships with five medals.

His mother, Julie Brown said: "He has been involved with karate since he was

three so he's been doing it for a while. He has done exceptionally well – a world champion and a second dan black belt.

"He got four golds and a silver at the Carlow championships and he has managed to get 24 gold, 12 silver and 11 bronze medals from various competitions this year.

"For his age, he was probably one of the youngest black belts in the area and he trains four to five times every week – he really works hard."

Since his success at the competition, Hawkes has been knuckling down at

Dudley Shukokai, located at Thorns Community College in Brierley Hill.

He attended the Welsh League karate competition at the end of October and came away with bronze, silver and gold medals and is set to travel to Malta and Romania to compete next year.

His little sister Darcey, aged five, is keen on karate too and scooped a silver medal at the Carlow International Karate Championships.

"She started when she was three and she is five now," said Julie. "She has done really well with it so far."

# WIN DENIED AS TRY RULED OUT

Old Halesonians 5 Birmingham Solihull 8  
**THIS was the 10th league game of a 26 game season and Hales were desperate to get back to early season form after three defeats.**

They were unable to break that run in a tight, low-scoring affair in front of two sets of partisan fans.

Early exchanges saw the home side in control and Bees spent little time in the Hales half for 40 minutes. Despite constant pressures, Hales were unable to break through the defence in a blank first half.

Hales felt they deserved more at this point, but within minutes of the restart they trailed 8-0. The Bees scored an early penalty and from the restart cut through the Hales defence for an unconverted try.

Hales regrouped and tried everything to pull back. They made changes and strong rucking by Hales resulted in Sam Jones driving over the line for a try 10 minutes from full time.

In the last play of the game, the ball was looped across the Hales backs for wing Luke Smith to sprint for the line, with two defenders tackling him, for a try in the corner. However, the referee judged the player to be out of play and having disallowed what would have been a winning score, the final whistle blew for a Bees victory.

Hales meet Bridgnorth away on Saturday, kick off 2.15

**Birmingham Solihull 2nds 52 Old Hales 12**  
OLD Hales went down to defeat in a league game against a very average Birmingham Solihull 2nds team.

After 18 minutes Old Hales lost possession on their right, which led to Bees taking the lead. Full-back James Worton drew Old Hales level, but the floodgates opened and four further tries took Bees to a 33-5 half-time lead.

No tries were scored during the first 20 minutes of the second half but then the visitors lost possession and the Bees left wing capitalised yet again. Poor tackling allowed Bees to score again for a commanding 45-5 lead.

Old Hales rallied and Sol Rogers was able to force his way over for a try, Matt Wagstaff landed the conversion. A final flourish saw Bees claim a converted try.

## Young players' international aid



England player Heather Fisher, far left, with the Old Halesonians under-16s squad

YOUNG Halesowen rugby players were given a coaching lesson by a top international player.

England women's star Heather Fisher dropped in on Old Halesonians mini and junior section as a guest coach ahead of some important matches last weekend.

Fisher visited as a guest coach for the under-16s squad and also found time to pop across to the girls teams to pass on some helpful tips. A winner of 22 caps for the England women's rugby union team, she played in the 2010 Women's Rugby World Cup and was part of the GB Rugby Sevens Team, at the Rio Olympics.

Under-16s head coach John Wragg said: "With an important cup match at the weekend

the boys are extremely fortunate to be able to benefit from Heather's coaching skills."

Any words of wisdom would have been much needed on Sunday as they faced previous cup winners Birmingham Solihull, featuring five u-16 international team players. However, the task proved beyond Old Hales as they went down 58-7.

Both the u-13s and u-15s girls team were also in action against a combined side from Camp Hill and Walsall. The u-13s girls stormed to a 17-2 victory, while the u-15s had a tight game which they ultimately won 8-5.

Heather will be making another visit to OHRFC later in the season.

## Zaber's title bid ended by cut eye

A NASTY cut curtailed Manny Zaber's hopes of claiming his first pro title as Josh Baillie went away with the British Challenge super featherweight belt.

Zaber, from Old Hill, was retired at the end of the fifth after a massive gash opened up above his left eye ending what was supposed to be an eight-rounder.

The battle headlined Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing show titled 'Going For Gold' at Walsall Town Hall on Saturday night.

Former Midlands, English and British lightweight champion Martin Gethin outpointed Liam Richards in a hometown bout – and is immediately back in action this weekend.

'The Quiet Man' had his hand raised for the 27th time in his 36th pro bout. The 32-year-old had hinted at retirement, but fights again on Saturday at Wembley Arena against John Wayne Hibbert for a title, which may be for the WBC International super lightweight belt.

Hot prospect Zach Parker settled for a points win, 60-54, over Adam Jones.

West Bromwich's Thomas Loach was the star of the other three four-rounders, scoring a third round stoppage at welterweight over debutant Jerral Spencer.

Wolverhampton's Joshua Burke was beaten by his gumshield as he was docked two points for losing his equipment. Six times the gumshield came out during a cruiserweight bout against Russ Henshaw, costing him a draw. Burke lost 39-37 on the cards.

Chasetown's Luke Jones' bout with Northern Irishman Alec Bazza at lightweight, was over at the end of the first round. The two butted heads accidentally, leaving both with a cut above the left eye. Bazza's injury was ruled too severe to continue and a victor could not be decided.

## Whiley looking to Master her rivals

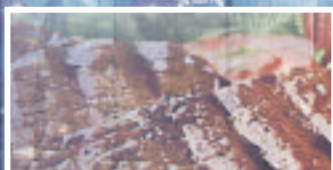
HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley has voiced her disappointment following a semi-final defeat at the Bath Indoor Wheelchair Tennis tournament last week.

Whiley, the world no 5, went down in straight sets, 6-3, 6-0, to Diede de Groot, but is back in action in London's Olympic Park at the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters 2016, which began yesterday (Wednesday) and ends on Sunday.

Whiley said: "I'm disappointed to lose but all in all it's not been a bad week. It's my first match back following my injury after Rio and it's been good to get some time on court before the Masters."

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